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Sensex jumps 1,006pts on buying in RIL, pvt banks

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Won't use Pahalgam for statehood demand: Omar

J&K CM Omar says he failed those who came as tourists

JAMMU, 28 APRIL

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday made it clear that he would not use the recent terror attack in Pahalgam to push for statehood restoration, stating that "his politics is not so cheap."

Omar, who also holds the tourism portfolio, admitted his government and he failed to ensure the safe return of tourists.

"I failed those who came to the state as tourists," he said.

The day-long special Assembly session was convened to condemn the killing of 26 people, mostly tourists, at Baisaran in Pahalgam. The House unanimously passed a resolution moved by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, vowing to defeat attempts to disturb communal harmony. A two-minute silence was observed in memory of the victims.

J&K CM Omar Abdullah with MLAs pay tributes to the victims of Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

"For the first time in 26 years, I have seen spontaneous outrage across Kashmir. From Kathua to Kupwara, people rose in unified condemnation, chanting 'Not in my name'," Omar said.

He directly confronted The Resistance Front (TRF), the Lashkar-e-Taiba offshoot that claimed responsibility, questioning its justification. "Did we ask for this? Did this attack have our consent?" he asked.

The Chief Minister paid tribute to Syed Adil Hussain Shah, a ponywallah from Anantnag who died protecting tourists. "He could have fled, but chose to face danger head-on," he said, also praising locals who aided stranded visitors with shelter and food. Omar stressed that militancy cannot be defeated by force alone, but through people's support: "True peace will come only when the people are with us."

Meanwhile, in London, 41-year-old Ankit Love, an Indian-origin man, was arrested for allegedly vandalising the Pakistani High Commission amid heightened Indo-Pak tensions. Charged with criminal damage, Love is set to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court. The incident has sparked protests from both Indian and Pakistani communities in the UK capital. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2, 3 & 5

China urges restraint, calls for fair probe

BEIJING, 28 APRIL

China on Monday called for a "swift and fair investigation" into the Pahalgam terror attack and urged India and Pakistan to exercise restraint and resolve tensions through dialogue.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Guo Jiakun said Beijing welcomes efforts to de-escalate the situation, but avoided confirming reports that Pakistan had requested China and Russia's involvement in the probe.

The statement followed a phone call between Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Wang reiterated China's support for Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and security, describing the country as an "ironclad friend."

China did not comment on India's suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, which prompted Pakistan to threaten to suspend the Simla Agreement and other bilateral accords.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharieef told his elder brother and party founder Nawaz Sharif that India's decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty had heightened the risk of a war. Nawaz advised Shehbaz not to take any aggressive action and to use diplomatic channels to ease tensions. Pakistan's defence minister said military incursion by India was imminent and that Pakistan has reinforced forces. *—Agencies*

CENSOR MUCH?

Govt writes to BBC for calling terrorists militants

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The government has formally expressed its strong objections to the BBC's coverage of the Pahalgam terror attack, accusing the UK-based broadcaster of misreporting the incident and using misleading terminology.

In a letter to Jackie Martin, BBC's India Head, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) raised concerns about the BBC's use of the term "militants" to describe the attackers, instead of "terrorists," which the government maintains is the appropriate term. The government has also criticised a BBC headline that read, "Pakistan suspends visas for Indians after deadly Kashmir attack on tourists," describing it as misleading and falsely implying India was responsible for the killings.

This follows a similar controversy in the US, where the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee called out The New York Times for referring to the attackers as "militants" rather than "terrorists." The committee even amended the term in a social media post, emphasising that the attack was an act of terrorism.

The MEA's External Publicity Division will now monitor the BBC's future reporting. *—PTI*

BBC NEWS

- The government has also criticised a BBC headline that read, "Pakistan suspends visas for Indians after deadly Kashmir attack on tourists," describing it as misleading.

Akhtar's YouTube channels among 16 banned

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

India has blocked the YouTube channels of former Pakistani cricketers Shoaib Akhtar and Basit Ali, following a government order citing national security and public order concerns after the Pahalgam terror attack. The Ministry of Home Affairs recommended the ban, arguing that these Pakistani channels were spreading provocative and misleading content about India and its military. Among the channels blocked are Dawn News, ARY News, and Geo News, among others. YouTube has displayed a message stating, "This content is currently unavailable in this country because of an order from the government related to national security or public order." Akhtar and Basit are known for their cricket analysis. *—PTI*

INDIA, FRANCE SIGN ₹64,000 CR DEAL FOR RAFALES

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

India and France have officially signed an intergovernmental agreement for the procurement of 26 naval variants of Rafale fighter jets, valued at approximately Rs 64,000 crore. This significant agreement, inked on Monday, also mandates the establishment of production facilities for Rafale fuselages in India, as well as maintenance, repair, and overhaul facilities for aircraft engines, sensors, and weapons, according to the Indian defence ministry.

The deal includes a technology transfer clause that allows for the integration of indigenous weapons, although specifics were not disclosed. The jets are set to be delivered by 2030, with crew training slated to occur in both France and India. The procurement aims to equip the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant with advanced maritime capabilities.

Manufactured by French defence giant Dassault Aviation, the Rafale-Marine is designed for carrier operations and has demonstrated its competencies in maritime environments. The agreement follows a recent approval from India's Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

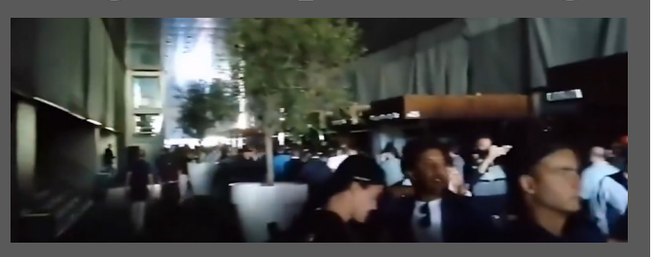
As part of the deal, the Indian Navy will also receive related ancillary equipment, including weapon systems and spare parts.

The ministry highlighted that the Rafale-Marine shares commonalities with the Rafale jets currently operational within the Indian Air Force, thus enhancing joint operational capabilities, training optimisation, and logistical support for both branches of the armed forces. *— PTI*

Major power outage hits Spain, Portugal

BARCELONA, 28 APRIL

A major power outage struck Spain, Portugal, and parts of France on Monday, disrupting subway networks, phone lines, traffic lights, and ATMs. The outage, which affected over 50 million people, began around midday and caused widespread chaos, including power failures in Madrid's parliament and subway stations. Emergency services switched to backup power, while hospitals and transport systems were severely impacted. Spain's electricity operator is working to restore power across the Iberian Peninsula. *—PTI*



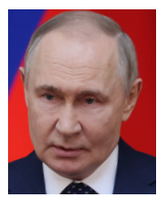
>>>More on Page 6

Putin declares 3-day truce in Ukraine

MOSCOW, 28 APRIL

In a significant move to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat in World War II, Russian President Vladimir Putin has declared a three-day ceasefire in Ukraine, commencing at midnight on 7-8 May. Putin urged the Ukrainian government to reciprocate the gesture.

The ceasefire will last from midnight on 7-8 May to midnight on 10-11 May, during which all military engagements are expected to halt. The Kremlin emphasised that any breaches of the ceasefire by Ukraine would be met with an "adequate and effective response" from Russian forces.



Moscow has reiterated its willingness to engage in peace talks without preconditions, focusing on resolving the underlying issues that have led to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and fostering constructive cooperation with international partners.

The 9th of May holds particular significance for Russia, marking the victory over Nazi Germany in which over 27 million Soviet lives were lost during the "Great Patriotic War". To honour this historic event, Russia has extended invitations to numerous world leaders, including India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to attend the commemorative parade in Red Square. Chinese President Xi Jinping has accepted the invitation; however, India has yet to confirm its representation at the event. *—PTI*

Vaibhav smashes 35-ball hundred, breaks world record

JAIPUR, 28 APRIL

Rajasthan Royal's newest batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi created history on Monday when he became the youngest batter ever to score an IPL century at the age of 14 years and 32 days here on Monday.

Suryavanshi brought up his whirlwind ton off only 35 balls with a whopping 11 sixes and seven fours, recording the second fastest century in the history of IPL. He was finally out for 101 off 37 balls, becoming the youngest ever to score a century in men's T20 cricket.

The record of fastest century in IPL belongs to former West Indies batter Chris Gayle, who had brought up his triple figure mark in 30 balls for Royal Challengers Bengaluru against Pune Warriors in April 2013.

Suryavanshi thus set the record for the fastest century for any Indian in the IPL off 35 balls, bettering Yusuf Pathan's record of a ton in 37 balls for RR against Mumbai Indians in 2010. His stunning knock came against IPL 2022 winners Gujarat Titans. *—PTI*

CM loses temper, makes slap gesture at cop

BELAGAVI, 28 APRIL

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah lost his cool on Monday during a Congress rally in Belagavi, following an interruption by alleged BJP workers.

The Chief Minister was addressing the "Samvidhan Bachao and Anti Price Rise Rally" here.

The protesters, disguised as Congress supporters, waved black flags and shouted slogans as Siddaramaiah began speaking at the 'Samvidhan Bachao' rally. The disruption led to a brief confrontation, with the police swiftly detaining the protesters.

The incident escalated when one of the detained women activists criticised Siddaramaiah's previous remarks about avoiding war with Pakistan. As the situation grew tense, the Chief Minister, visibly frustrated, raised his hand at a police officer on stage but quickly regained composure. Senior Congress leaders, including AICC General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, attempted to calm him down, and the microphone was temporarily muted to prevent further escalation.

Siddaramaiah, resuming his speech, condemned the BJP for attempting to disrupt the rally and incite division. He assured the crowd that Congress workers would not be intimidated by such tactics.

Siddaramaiah criticised the lack of security presence when terrorists killed innocent tourists at Pahalgam in Kashmir, and sought to know whether it was not a "failure" of security and intelligence under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Strongly rejecting criticisms of his "no need for war" comments, which were amplified by Pakistan media, the Congress leader dismissed them as "false propaganda" while holding the central government accountable for its "failures". *—Salar News*

AHEAD OF POLLS

Girinath moved out as BBMP Chief, Maheshwar to replace him

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

In a big bureaucratic reshuffle, the Karnataka government has transferred Tushar Girinath, IAS (1993 batch), from his post as Chief Commissioner of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Girinath, who held the top civic post for nearly three years, has been appointed Additional Chief Secre-tary to the Government, Urban Development Department.

A government notification issued on Monday stated that Girinath will also concurrently serve as Addi-tional Chief Secretary to the Home Department and as BBMP Administrator, temporarily replacing Umashankar SR, who retires on 30 April.

Maheshwar Rao M, IAS (1995 batch), currently Managing Director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), has been given concurrent charge as the new Chief Commissioner of BBMP.

The government further clarified that the roles of BBMP Administrator and Chief Commissioner are equivalent to the cadre post of Additional Chief Secretary, as per the IAS (Pay) Rules. Girinath's tenure was marked by significant challenges, including managing Bengaluru's urban expansion, major infrastructure upgrades, and responding to growing public scrutiny of the civic body's perfor-mance.

His replacement comes at a critical time as the city prepares for major civic initiatives and ongoing infra-structure development. *—Salar News*

Tushar Girinath

Maheshwar Rao M

- Girinath's tenure was marked by significant challenges, including managing Bengaluru's urban expansion, major infrastructure upgrades, and responding to growing public scrutiny of the civic body's per-for-mance. His replacement comes at a critical time as the city prepares for major civic initiatives and ongoing infra-structure development.

RAMPANT CORRUPTION IN CBI, ED: DELHI HC

NEW DLHI, 28 APRIL

In a rare move, the Delhi High Court has remanded three CBI officials to the custody of their own agency in a corruption case that, according to the court, "shakes the edifice" of the investigative machin-ery meant to uphold justice.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, in her 25 April order, described it as a case of "rampant corruption" within agencies like the CBI and ED, involving a wider conspiracy among officials to accept bribes in exchange for manipulating investigations.

The complainant alleged the CBI officials demanded a 50 lakh bribe, later reduced to 35 lakh, to "settle" two cases. One officer was caught red-handed accepting 3.5 lakh, while another Finance Min-istry official allegedly accepted 50,000 via Google Pay to influence ED proceedings. A lower court had denied CBI custody of the accused. However, the High Court granted a two-day re-mand, stressing custodial interrogation was vital to uncover the full extent of the conspiracy, calling the case "grave" and far-reaching in impact. *—PTI*

Banashankari e-crematorium shut for 10 days

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

The Banashankari electric crematorium will be temporarily closed for 10 days from April 29 to May 8 due to urgent maintenance work, civic officials announced on Monday. According to the BBMP's Electricity Division, damage to the coils and bricks in both furnaces has made immediate repairs necessary. The crematorium, which falls under the South Zone limits, will remain non-operational during this period. Officials have urged the public to make alternative arrangements and use nearby electric crematoria. The executive engineer of the Electricity Division stated that public notices have been issued in advance to minimise inconvenience. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Traffic cops book 670 for drunken driving

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

The Bengaluru Traffic Police on Monday said around 670 cases of drunk driving were registered, and Rs 1.89 lakh was collected as fine from those found speeding, during a week-long drive conducted across the city. The drive was conducted from 21 to 27 April across the city by traffic officers from 53 traffic police stations, police said. The police said that during the special drive against drunken driving, 43, 253 vehicles were checked and 668 cases registered against offenders. Altogether 185 cases were registered against those found over-speeding and a total fine of Rs 1.89 lakh was collected. "The drive was aimed at improving safety by curbing drunk driving and speeding in the city. It will continue," the police said. *—PTI*

BBMP to distribute cycles to high school students

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) will resume bicycle distribution for high school students from the upcoming academic year, reviving a scheme discontinued in 2020. Initially launched in 2006–07 under the JD(S)-BJP coalition to benefit government school students, the scheme was halted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite schools reopening, efforts to restart it in 2022–23 were blocked by the Finance Department. Now, BBMP plans to distribute bicycles to Class 8 students in BBMP-run and government-aided schools. Students must apply at the time of admission to benefit from the initiative. The move is part of BBMP's 2025–26 budget, which allocates Rs 721.40 crore for welfare schemes, up from ₹554.05 crore the previous year. The additional Rs 167 crore has enabled the launch of new programmes, including the cycle scheme. The initiative aims to promote environmental awareness and beat traffic. *—PTI*

After stir, rlys lets candidates wear mangalsutra in exam

The exam is scheduled to be held on 29 April in Mangaluru

MANGALURU/ BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

The Railways on Monday withdrew an instruction to candidates appearing for the Nursing Superintendent examination to remove religious symbols worn by them, after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and other religious organisations strongly objected to it.

The railway authorities have issued a clarification that candidates will not be required to remove religious symbols, such as the mangalsutra (a sacred necklace worn by married Hindu women) and janivara (sacred thread worn by Brahmins), before entering the exam hall.

Following the outrage, Minister of State for Railways V Somanna has also clarified that candidates appearing for the Railway Recruitment Board's Nursing Superintendent exam would not be required to remove any religious symbols on their person. He also instructed officials to ensure that religious sentiments are respected during the examination process.

According to the officials, the examination is scheduled to be held on 29 April at the Manail Srinivas Nayak Besant Vidya Kendra in Bondel in Mangaluru.

Initially, the admit cards had directed candidates to remove the mangalsutra and janivara before writing the exam.

Sharan Pumpwell, regional leader of the VHP, said, "We are watching the developments; if any of these measures (removal of Hindu religious symbols from candidates) are enforced by the examination authorities, we will take the corrective course."

Hindu organisations argued that it deeply hurt their religious sentiments. "Asking married women to remove their mangalsutra and sindoor and asking men to remove their janivara amounts to attacking sacred Hindu traditions followed by crores of people," a VHP spokesperson said. *—PTI*

Initially, the admit cards had directed candidates to remove the mangalsutra and janivara before writing the exam **PHOTO: X**

BJP says one thing and does another. It is not correct that the Centre has disallowed mangalasutra and janivara in Ralways examinations, they should revoke it

-DK Shivakumar, DyCM

FOR BETTER ADMIN

BBMP to be split into 3 bodies under Greater B'luru Bill

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is likely to be divided into three separate municipal corporations, with the State Government set to proceed once the Governor grants formal assent to the Greater Bengaluru Bill.

Sources told Salar News on Monday that the Governor has given in-principle approval for the division, provided the number of corporations does not exceed seven. The government plans to split the City — with a population exceeding 1.5 crore — into three corporations: Bengaluru Central, Bengaluru North, and Bengaluru South, each overseeing 150 wards and serving around 50 lakh residents.

A new oversight body, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), will supervise all three corporations.

The government also plans to expand the city's administrative boundaries by including areas such as Electronics City, Attibele, Jigani Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Bagaluru, Rajanukunte, Hesaraghatta, Dasanapura, Makali, Tavarekere, Kumbalagodu, Kaggalipura, and Harohalli. Several gram panchayats in these regions may lose their independent status.

A preliminary notification will be issued soon, followed by a 30-day window for public objections and suggestions. A final notification will be released after reviewing the feedback. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: BBMP

A NIA team question Pahalgam victim Bharat Bushan's wife, Sujatha, for nearly six hours on events leading up to the ambush **PHOTO: SALAR**

NIA questions Bharath Bhushan's family in City

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

A team from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday visited the home of Bharath Bhushan, the Bengaluru-based tourist killed in last week's terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, and questioned his family for nearly 12 hours.

Four NIA officials recorded an extensive statement from Bhushan's wife, Sujatha, at their Mathikere residence. The questioning focused on the family's travel plans, their stay in Kashmir, and the events leading up to the ambush. Sujatha was interrogated for around six hours.

The NIA is attempting to trace the movements of the terrorists involved. Sujatha was shown photos of over 14 suspects and asked for possible identification and asked whether her husband had any interaction with the attackers, to describe their appearance, speech, or any distinctive features. Based on her inputs, sketches of the assailants were reportedly prepared.

Officials also gathered behavioural cues, including the language spoken to aid identification.

Meanwhile, Revenue Department officials visited the Bhushan residence to collect documentation for the Rs 10 lakh compensation.

The NIA is also expected to visit Shivamogga to question the family of Manjunath Rao, who was killed in the attack. *—Salar news*

BJP urges Guv to revoke suspension of 18 MLAs

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

Opposition BJP on Monday petitioned Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, seeking revocation of the "undemocratic and unconstitutional" suspension of 18 of its MLAs from the Legislative Assembly. They requested Gehlot to direct Speaker UT Khader to reconsider the decision.

The BJP's 18 MLAs were suspended for six months from the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on 21 March, for "indiscipline" and "disrespecting" the Speaker, following which they were forcefully evicted from the House by the marshals when they refused to leave.

The BJP delegation, led by state unit President BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, met the Governor and submitted a memorandum to him.

"We most respectfully beseech your excellency to kindly exercise your good offices to direct the Speaker, Karnataka Legislative Assembly, to reconsider the suspension order imposed upon the 18 Members of the Legislative Assembly belonging to the principal opposition party in the state," the memorandum said.

They also requested that "the suspension be revoked, thereby enabling the concerned legislators to resume their responsibilities as representatives of the people. And to take all necessary steps to uphold the basic tenet of democratic values in the State of Karnataka."

On the last day of the Assembly's budget session, BJP MLAs staged a protest against 4 per cent reservation to Muslims in public contracts and demanded a judicial probe into the alleged "honey-trap" attempt against Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna, during which some of them climbed onto the podium of the Speaker's Chair, while a few others hurled papers at the Speaker. *—PTI*

The BJP delegation, led by state unit President BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka met Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

DCs TO AUDIT SNAKE BITE DEATHS

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

The State government has authorised all Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to review the audit of the snakebite-related deaths and take necessary measures to ensure effective implementation of National Programme for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming (NPSE), officials said on Monday.

The move follows concerns raised by the health department, which stated that despite efforts to reduce the morbidity and mortality due to snakebite, the state "continues to face challenges in the implementation of the programme".

To address these challenges, the health department issued an order stating that the H1N1 death audit committee also bear the responsibility of auditing deaths due to snakebite.

"The Deputy Commissioners are here by directed to conduct review meetings of snakebite cases in the district at least once in every quarter and implementation of National Programme for Prevention and Control of Snakebite Envenoming," the order said. *—PTI*

TEJASVI SLAMS ₹10L AID FOR PAHALGAM

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

BJP leader Tejasvi Surya on Monday slammed the Karnataka government for announcing Rs 10 lakh compensation for the families of the Pahalgam terror attack victims and called it "shameful" for not considering adequate support for the survivors.

Both women are single mothes supporting young children and need urgent help to educate and secure their future, he said.

"When Karnataka Government could award a compensation of Rs 15 lakh after a man was trampled to death by an elephant in Rahul Gandhi's previous constituency in Wayanad, it's shameful that it is not even considering a suitable compensation for the survivors of the terror attack," he said.*—Salar News*

LEAVES WIFE FOR LOVER

Freight company owner abducted, murdered

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

A freight company owner was abducted at knifepoint and murdered by a gang of unidentified men in Bengaluru on Sunday night.

The victim, Dileep, was dining with a woman at Garden Hotel in Nelamangala when five to six armed men stormed in, threatened him, and dragged him away in front of shocked onlookers.

His body was found near Tumakuru the following morning, police confirmed.

Originally from Tumakuru, Dileep operated a cargo business in Dabaspet and was living in a rented house in Solur. He had separated from his first wife and was reportedly in a relationship with Amrutha, the wife of his landlord.

Police sources said Amrutha left her husband to live with Dileep, a development that may have provoked resentment among her family and Dileep's acquaintances.

Investigators revealed that Dileep had recently received threat calls.

Suspicion currently centres on members of Amrutha's family, though police are examining multiple leads.

Nelamangala police have registered a case.*—Salar News*

Dileep **PHOTO: Salar**

MAN KILLED IN CRASH WHILE CARRYING PET

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

A 24-year-old man lost his life in a motorcycle accident after a pet dog, held by his pillion passenger, un-expectedly moved, leading to a loss of control near the Kanakapura toll gate on NICE Road.

The victim, identified as Chetan, resided in Weavers Colony, Bengaluru, and worked as a food delivery executive, supporting his family as their sole breadwinner.

According to the Talaghattapura Traffic Police, Chetan and a friend were returning from Arsikere Temple on a motorbike with the friend carrying the pet dog around 9:15 PM on Sunday. As they approached the toll gate, the dog became restless, causing Chetan to lose balance and collide with another motorcycle ahead.

Chetan was thrown from the bike and sustained critical injuries. Despite being rushed to hospital, he tragically succumbed to his injuries en route. His friend, who was also injured in the incident, is currently receiving treatment.

The Talaghattapura Traffic Police have registered a case and are conducting further investigations.

Authorities have urged motorists to exercise extreme caution when travelling with pets, emphasising that even minor distractions can lead to devastating consequences. *—Salar News*

HAJJ SEASON BEGINS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with Hajj Minister Raheem Khan, Ministers BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, and AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali, attended the inaugural Hajj flight ceremony at Hajj Bhavan in Bengaluru on Monday. **PHOTOS: SALAR**

'CASTE ABUSE' CASE

HC bins FIR against Kris, IISc members

BENGALURU, 28 APRIL

The High Court has quashed an FIR against Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan and others under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and termed the complaint "an abuse of the process of law" and granted liberty to initiate criminal contempt proceedings against the complainant.

The FIR was filed by D Sanna Durgappa, an Indian Institute of Science (IISc) faculty member terminated in 2014 over sexual harassment allegations. He alleged that he targetted due to his caste.

Justice Hemant Chandangoudar, who passed the order on 16 April, observed that the complaint was a "vexatious attempt to harass the petitioners". The court noted that the termination was later converted into resignation after challenged in the HC in 2015. As part of the settlement, Durgappa had agreed to withdraw all legal proceedings against the institution and its representatives. Despite this, he proceeded to file two more FIRs, both of which were quashed in 2022 and 2023. The current FIR, the court observed, contained similar allegations and was an abuse of judicial process. "This judgment reaffirms that misuse of legal provisions has no place in a fair and just system. I am grateful that the Hon'ble High Court has seen through the falsehoods and upheld the truth," Kris said. *—ANI*

The current FIR, the court observed, contained similar allegations and was an abuse of judicial process; Inset: Kris Gopalakrishnan **PHOTO: PTI**

- Asked The FIR was filed by D Sanna Durgappa, an Indian Institute of Science (IISc) faculty member terminated in 2014 over sexual harassment allegations.

Yamuna water fails quality test at 22 locations

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on Monday said 22 of the 33 locations at Yamuna River being monitored did not meet the compliance standards of the Central Pollution Control Board in 2024. A PowerPoint presentation by the ministry to a parliamentary standing committee said all seven and 12 locations in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, respectively, failed the "primary water quality criteria for outdoor bathing", while all four locations in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh each passed it, sources said. In Haryana, three of the six locations at Yamuna met the required conditions, while as many failed. —*PTI*

Passenger beaten for watching Pahalgam reel

GUWAHATI, 28 APRIL

The Government Railway Police (GRP) lodged a First Information Report (FIR) against two unidentified individuals following the alleged assault of a 23-year-old man aboard the Bhopal-Indore passenger train. According to the victim, the incident occurred on 27 April when he was watching a video relating to the recent Pahalgam terror attack, which sparked anger from the accused. He alleged that during an argument, the attackers made derogatory remarks about India and the Constitution, even attempting to throw him from the moving train. —*PTI*

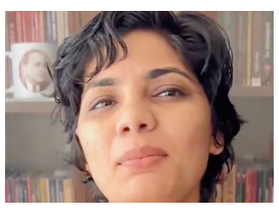


PHOTO: X

UP folk singer booked for 'provocative' posts

LUCKNOW, 28 APRIL

Police here have registered a case of sedition against folk singer Neha Singh Rathore over a complaint that her provocative social media posts targeting a particular faith community in the wake of the Pahalgam tragedy could harm the nation's unity. "In this situation, singer and poetess Neha Singh Rathore, using her X handle made some objectionable posts that can adversely affect the national integrity and made repeated efforts to incite one community against another based on religion," the complainant, Abhay Pratap Singh, said. Rathore, known for songs such as 'Bihar mein ka ba', 'UP mein ka ba?', and 'MP mein ka ba?', said the government wants to divert attention from "real issues" by filing an FIR against her. "What has the government done so far in response to the Pahalgam attack? An FIR against me? If you have the guts then go, bring the heads of the terrorists. No need to blame me for your failures. —*PTI*

Mano Thangaraj rejoins TN cabinet after reshuffle

CHENNAI, 28 APRIL

T Mano Thangaraj, the DMK MLA from Padmanabhapuram, was sworn in on Monday as the Tamil Nadu Minister for Milk and Dairy Development, following a minor cabinet reshuffle after the resignation of two senior ministers. Governor RN Ravi administered the oath at a ceremony attended by Chief Minister M K Stalin and Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, marking their first meeting since the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the DMK government regarding delayed assent to state Bills. The reshuffle came after V Senthil Balaji and K Ponmudy stepped down from their ministerial positions amid legal issues. Balaji is embroiled in an ED investigation linked to a cash-for-jobs scam, while Ponmudy faced backlash for controversial remarks. The portfolios previously held by the resigned ministers have been redistributed among other cabinet members. —*PTI*

India spent 9 times that of Pak on military in 2024

Pak, India continue to trade fire for 4th straight day along LoC

NEW DELHI/ JAMMU 28 APRIL

India's military expenditure grew by 1.6 per cent to USD 86.1 B while Pakistan's spent USD 10.2 B ***PHOTO: ANI***

India's military spending in 2024 was nearly nine times that of Pakistan's expenditure, according to a study released on Monday by a leading Swedish think-tank. The report comes amid growing tensions between the two countries over the Pahalgam attack.

India's military expenditure, the fifth largest globally, grew by 1.6 per cent to USD 86.1 billion while Pakistan's spent USD 10.2 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The top five military spenders -- the United States, China, Russia, Germany and India -- accounted for 60 per cent of the global total, with combined spending of USD 1635 billion, it said.

China's military expenditure increased by 7.0 per cent to an estimated USD 314 billion, marking three decades of consecutive growth, the study noted.

China accounted for 50 per cent of all military spending in Asia and Oceania, investing in the continued modernisation of its military and expansion of its cyberwarfare capabilities and nuclear arsenal, it said in the report titled 'Trends in World Military Expenditure 2024'.

Meanwhile, Pakistani troops continued "unprovoked firing "in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Kupwara districts along the LoC, Army officials said. India retaliated in a similar fashion.

This was the fourth consecutive night that Pakistan resorted to small-arms fire along the Line of Control (LoC).

There were no reports of any casualties.

A defence spokesperson said, "During the night of 27-28 April, Pakistan Army posts initiated unprovoked small arms fire across the LoC in areas opposite Kupwara and Poonch districts." —*PTI*

Kejri, BJP must apologise for '2G lies': Cong on ED's closure report

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Congress said former Delhi chief minister Sheila Dixit and former prime minister Manmohan Singh were innocent ***PHOTO: WIKICOMMONS***

With a Delhi court accepting the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) closure report in a case related to the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the Congress on Monday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal must apologise to it and the people of India for misleading the country.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said before 2014, AAP convenor Kejriwal and the BJP had come together to "fabricate scams" like 2G and Commonwealth Games (CWG) to defame his party.

The truth of 2G had already come out in court and on Monday, the court accepted the ED's closure report in the CWG case as well, Ramesh said.

"Two very honest and dedicated leaders -- Dr Manmohan Singh and Mrs Sheila Dixit -- were falsely accused," he said on X. "It is clear -- both the allegations were false! Narendra Modi and Arvind Kejriwal must apologise to the Congress and the people of India for misleading the country," he said.

Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera alleged that for years, the BJP ecosystem weaponised lies to tarnish the grand old party over issues like 2G, CWG, Robert Vadra and coal.

"These cases were never about justice; they were about political persecution, headlines over substance, and deflecting attention from their own failures," Khera said.

"The collapse of these manufactured cases is not just a legal victory, it is a moral and political indictment of the BJP's politics of false narrative," he added. —*PTI*

Gujarat cops detain 6,500 'Bangladeshis'

INDORE, 28 APRIL

Around 450 Bangladeshi nationals have been found to be residing illegally in Gujarat so far after police launched a crackdown and detained nearly 6,500 undocumented people who are suspected to be citizens of the neighbouring country, DGP Vikas Sahay said on Monday.

Director General of Police (DGP) Sahay said following mega search operations in Ahmedabad and Surat, similar exercises were undertaken across the state, with a total around 6,500 suspected illegal Bangladeshi immigrants detained and their identities being verified.

"After mega search operations were carried out in Ahmedabad and Surat, all districts and police commissionerates of Gujarat were asked to undertake the task. As per information available with me, we have detained around 6,500 suspected Bangladeshi citizens and questioned them," he informed. "We feel we will be able to establish the identity of a large number of illegal Bangladeshis." —*PTI*

BJP slams Tikait for questioning IWT call-off; says he speaks language of Pak

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Rakesh Tikait ***PHOTO: PTI***

- BKU leader Rakesh Tikait suggested that India should not have held the Indus Water Treaty in abeyance as it would significantly impact farmers in Pakistan

The BJP on Monday accused Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) president Rakesh Tikait of speaking the "language of Pakistan" after he took exception to the government's decision of putting in abeyance the Indus Waters treaty in consequence to the Pahalgam terror attack.

Tikait in a video clip that made rounds on social media condemned the Pahalgam terror strike but also reportedly raised questions on the government's line of action post-Pahalgam.

"Will people of Kashmir, who depend on tourism and sale of fruits-vegetables, prosper by carrying out such incident there? Catch the ones who are benefitting from it, or else such kind of incidents will continue to take place," the farmer leader had said.

He added the Indian government shouldn't have suspended of the Indus Waters treaty with Pakistan as it would affect the common people, especially farmers, in the neighbouring country.

Tikait said that the government should strengthen border security in view of the Pakistan's "bad image in the world" and arm local villagers to take on the intruders

BJP Kisan Morcha president and MP Rajkumar Chahar condemned these remarks by Tikait and demanded his apology.

"Rakesh Tikait is speaking the language of Pakistan. He says the government's decision to stop water was wrong. He says that all Pakistanis are not culprits, only some people did that (terror strike)," he charged. —*PTI*

CORONER OF A CRICKET FIELD

Shoaib Akhtar, Basit Ali's YouTube channels banned

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Basit Ali ***PHOTO: FB***

Former Pakistan cricketers Shoaib Akhtar and Basit Ali's Youtube channels have been blocked in India following "an order from the government related to national security or public order" in the wake of Pahalgam terror attack.

The move follows recommendations from the Ministry of Home Affairs in which it said that the Pakistani YouTube channels were "disseminating provocative and communally sensitive content, false and misleading narratives and misinformation against India, its Army and security agencies".

Dawn News, Irshad Bhatti, Samaa TV, ARY News, Bol News, Raftar, The Pakistan Reference, Geo News, Samaa Sports, GNN, Uzair Cricket, Umar Cheema Exclusive, Asma Shirazi, Muneeb Farooq, Suno News and Razi Naama are the other Pakistani channels banned in India.

Following the order, the channels have been withheld by Youtube.

"This content is currently unavailable in this country because of an order from the government related to national security or public order," stated a YouTube message on logging into the channels.

Akhtar, a former pacer of repute, is a popular figure among Indian fans for his in-depth and often humorous analysis of international cricket issues.

Basit, a former Pakistan coach, runs similar content on his channel. —*PTI*

Cong: Toe party line or don't talk on Pahalgam

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Shashi Tharoor ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Directing its leaders to either toe the party line or refrain from commenting on the Pahalgam attack, the Congress on Monday asserted that only the recent CWC resolution along with the views of party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and authorised AICC office-bearers represent its position.

The Opposition party's assertion comes in the wake of remarks by leaders like Vijay Wadettiwar, Mani Shankar Aiyar, Shashi Tharoor, Tariq Hameed Karra and Saifuddin Soz that have triggered a row, with the BJP alleging that some from the opposition party were speaking "Pakistan's language".

The Congress Working Committee had termed the Pahalgam attack masterminded by Pakistan as a direct assault on the values of our republic. It also called for a comprehensive examination of intelligence failures and security lapses.

Both Kharge and Gandhi had expressed support for the government on whatever action it takes on the matter.

"Some Congress leaders have been speaking to the media. They speak for themselves and do not reflect the Congress' views," Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said. —*PTI*

INDIA GREETS TALIBAN MINISTER

Anand Prakash, a top Indian diplomat met the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, according to an official release on Monday. Prakash, Joint Secretary of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran Division met the Taliban government's Foreign Minister. The two discussed ways to strengthen bilateral political relations and enhance trade and transit cooperation, according to a release by the Afghan Foreign Ministry. Muttaqi underscored the importance of expanding diplomatic and economic relations between Kabul and New Delhi. The meeting came after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Muttaqi in Dubai in January ***PHOTO: ANI***

Pak nationals with NORI visa allowed to cross over

INDORE, 28 APRIL

A total of 70 Pakistani nationals, who were issued the NORI (No Obligation to Return to India) visa, crossed over to India through the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at the Attari border here on Monday, officials said.

Earlier, Pakistanis nationals, married in India, were not allowed to return to India.

However, Indian authorities on Monday allowed the Pakistani nationals with NORI visas to cross over.

Asma, who had gone to Pakistan two months ago to visit her parents, could not come back after the Centre revoked all visas issued to Pakistani nationals. She was overjoyed upon being able to retrurn. —*PTI*

FAMILY BONANZA

TN hikes marriage advances for govt workers

CHENNAI, 28 APRIL

Tamil Nadu CM Stalin said the marriage advance was hiked to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 10,000 to males, and Rs 6,000 to females ***PHOTO: ANI***

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin made a slew of announcements aimed at ensuring the welfare of state government employees and teachers, including announcing a manifold jump in the "marriage advance," besides a 2 per cent DA hike.

Making the announcements in the state Assembly, the CM also proposed various benefits to pensioners.

While the "marriage advance" at present was Rs 10,000 to males, and Rs 6,000 to females, "it is being increased manifold and government employees and teachers will now be provided Rs 5 lakh," Stalin said.

He also announced a 2 per cent increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) with effect from 1 April and said this would benefit about 16 lakh employees, teachers, pensioners, and those availing family pension. This would entail an additional allocation of Rs 1,252 crore annually, Stalin noted.

He also said the maternity leave will be for one-year period from the present nine months.

Also, Stalin announced an increase in the existing advances for festivals, children's and education. The festival advance would be increased to Rs 20,000 from Rs 1,000. Similarly, the education advances for vocational courses will be hiked to Rs 1,00,000 and the sum for arts and science and polytechnic would be increased to Rs 50,000.

The Pongal festival bonus given to state government retired C and D category staff, all types of individual pensioners and family pensioners will be increased from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000. —*PTI*

Over 100 youths de-radicalised: TN govt

CHENNAI, 28 APRIL

Over 100 youth with radical ideology and leaning towards banned international terror organisations including the ISIS were identified by the state police and subjected to a de-radicalisation programme, the Tamil Nadu government said on Monday.

They were identified by the Special Intelligence Units (SIUs), the policy note on Home Department for 2025-26 tabled in the Assembly by Chief Minister MK Stalin said.

"Efforts were taken in identifying several youth having radical ideology and leaning towards certain international terrorist organisations, like ISIS, Al Qaeda etc. In order to de-radicalise and induct them into main stream of society, services of religious scholars, psychiatrists have been utilised. So far, 101 radicalised youth irrespective of religions, were subject to de-radicalisation programme which includes 19 persons during 2024," it said.

Further, the police thwarted the attempts of 'some persons' supporting the banned Hizb-ut-Tahir (HUT) in the state, following an intelligence report, and arrested them under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

"Tamil Nadu has remained free from significant communal or caste-related violence, reinforcing a stable and secure social environment. Law and order has remained stable throughout the year," the note added. CM Stalin holds the Home portfolio. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Actors Shine, Bhasi record statements in drug case

ALAPPUZHA, 28 APRIL

Malayalam actors Shine Tom Chacko and Sreenath Bhasi on Monday appeared before an excise team probing the seizure of hybrid ganja worth Rs 2 crore from a woman in Alappuzha district earlier this month. State Excise Department arrested peddler Taslima Sulthana and accomplice and recovered the ganja on 2 April. Her statement said, the contraband was brought into the state for distribution in tourism and film industries. She claimed that she used to supply drugs to film personalities and mentioned the names of two prominent actors. It was based on this statement and subsequent investigation that Excise Department issued notices to Chacko and Bhasi. A woman model was also summoned. *—PTI*

Aamir Khan's Guru Nanak poster 'completely fake'

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

A poster featuring Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan as Guru Nanak is "completely fake and AI generated", said a spokesperson for the actor on Monday after it started going viral on social media. The poster shows Khan "in and as Guru Nanak" with a teaser trailer set to arrive soon. In a statement, the spokesperson for the actor asked fans to be wary of fake news on social media. "The poster showing Khan as Guru Nanak is completely fake and AI generated. Khan has no connection to any such project. He holds the highest respect for Guru Nanak and would never be part of anything disrespectful. *—PTI*

Malayalam filmmaker Shaji N Karun dies at 73

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 28 APRIL

Legendary Malayalam filmmaker and cinematographer Shaji N Karun, known for his pathbreaking films and distinctive style of movie making, died here on Monday, industry sources said. Karun had been unwell for some time and was battling health issues, they said. The demise of the eminent filmmaker comes days after he was honoured with the JC Daniel Award for lifetime contribution to Malayalam cinema, the highest film honour instituted by the state government, at a function here. Shaji Neelakantan Karunakaran, popularly known as Shaji N Karunne was one of the pioneers of new wave cinema in Malayalam. *—PTI*

Nigerian actor held with Rs 30L MDMA in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

A Nigerian national who had worked in several Bollywood films alongside well-known actors was arrested along with an accomplice for drug trafficking in Delhi, police said on Monday. The duo was caught with 354g of MDMA, comprising 769 tablets and valued at around Rs 30 lakh, they said. The accused have been identified as Patrik, 47, a native of Abia state in Nigeria, and Shashikant Ravindra Prabhu, 42, from Maharashtra. He said a scooter allegedly used for drug delivery was also seized from their possession. Statement said, Patrik had arrived in India in 2008 on a business visa and stayed illegally after its expiry. He found work in the film industry, featuring in various Bollywood projects, but later fell into drug abuse and eventually into trafficking. *—PTI*

SC notice to govt, OTTs on sexual content

Children are more exposed to 'indecent' contents on OTT platforms and social media

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre, OTTs and social media on a plea seeking a ban on streaming of sexually explicit content on the platforms.

"The present petition raises an important concern with regard to the display of various objectionable, obscene and indecent contents on OTT platforms and social media," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih recorded in its order.

The bench said it was either for the legislature or the executive to come out with measures to deal with the issue.

"This is not within our domain. As it is, there is lot of allegation that we are encroaching upon the legislative and executive powers," Justice Gavai said in an apparent reference to Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's recent attacks on the judiciary.

- When the bench offered to issue notice on the plea for responses from the Centre and others, including some OTT and social media platforms, Mehta said it may not be necessary to issue notice to others.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the government would not take it as an adversarial litigation. He said some of the content was so "perverse" even two respectable men couldn't sit and watch it together.

Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for the petitioners, said the plea raised a serious concern over such contents on over-the-top (OTT) and social media. He claimed that children were more exposed to it.

When the bench offered to issue notice on the plea for responses from the Centre and others, including some OTT and social media platforms, Mehta said it may not be necessary to issue notice to others.

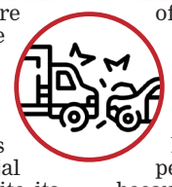
"Let them be before the court," Justice Gavai said, "as they also have some social responsibility".

The bench was hearing a plea filed by five petitioners who sought guidelines to constitute an authority to prohibit online dissemination of obscene content. *—PTI*

SC: Indians have big highways, but die due to poor facilities

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The Supreme Court rapped the Centre over the delay in formulating a cashless scheme for treating motor accident victims. It said the Centre is constructing huge highways but people are dying because of a lack of facilities on Monday.



A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan observed despite its 8 January order, the Centre neither complied with the direction nor did it ask for an extension of time.

"You are in contempt. You have not bothered to seek extension of time. You don't care for your own statutes. This is one of the welfare provisions. Are you really working for the welfare of common man?" the bench asked. "Can you be so casual? People are dying in road accidents. You are constructing huge highways but people are dying there because there is no facility. There is no scheme for golden hour treatment. What is the use of constructing so many highways?" *—PTI*

SC junks plea against mandating of Telugu for T'gana civil judges

New Delhi, 28 April

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea challenging an order upholding a 2023 rule mandating proficiency in Telugu language to qualify for the civil judge's post in Telangana. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih told the petitioner's counsel, "(The rule) only says you need to know Telugu." The petitioner sought a direction to provide the option of being proficient either in Telugu or Urdu as a qualification aside from providing the option of translating from English to Telugu or Urdu and vice versa in written examination conducted under the 2023 Rules. The petitioner's counsel said 15 per cent population in Telangana was Urdu speaking. *—PTI*

SC refuses fresh plea challenging Waqf (Amendment) Act

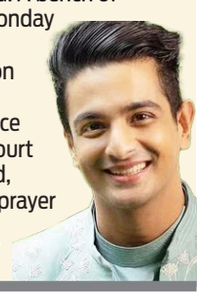
New Delhi, 28 April

The Supreme Court refused to entertain a fresh plea challenging constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, saying it cannot entertain "hundreds" of petitions on the issue. On Monday, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar asked the counsel for petitioner Syed Ali Akbar to file an intervention application in pending five cases which will be taken up on 5 May for passing interim orders. *—PTI*

SC orders return of passport to Ranveer Allahbadia

New Delhi, 28 April

The Supreme Court allowed return of passport to podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia to enable him travel abroad. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh on Monday relaxed the condition after Assam and Maharashtra governments said the investigation against him was complete. The bench asked Allahbadia to approach Maharashtra cyber police bureau for the return of his passport. The top court also told senior advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, appearing for Allahbadia, it would consider his prayer for clubbing the FIRs against his client and bring it in one place on the next hearing. *—PTI*



WANT TO MEET DIDI

Over 400 jobless Bengal school employees block Kolkata road

KOLKATA, 28 APRIL

Over 400 people, among the 25,753 teaching and non-teaching staff rendered jobless following the Supreme Court order on 3 April, on Monday blocked the Hazra Crossing in south Kolkata demanding an audience with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Traffic came to a standstill for nearly an hour along the busy Asutosh Mukherjee Road-Hazra Road crossing as protesters voiced their anger at being labelled "tainted" despite qualifying in the 2016 WBSSC Recruitment Test.

They demanded to be reinstated or at least allowed to work until 31 December, following the court's directive that allowed some teachers to continue temporarily.

As police tried to stop them from moving towards the CM's official residence in Kalighat area, around 1 km away, the protesters scuffled with police and squatted in the middle of the road.

Teachers who lost their job following a court verdict, sit on the road in Kolkata as a sign of protest **PHOTO: PTI**

Some of them were forced to board waiting police vehicles, while others were persuaded to move to the side of road.

One protester, a woman lying in the middle of the road, refused to budge even after a senior police officer folded his hands and pleaded with her to move aside.

The blockade, organised by the United Teaching and Non-Teaching Employees Forum, lasted around 40 minutes before police managed to clear the area.

The Supreme Court has scrapped the entire 2016 WBSSC recruitment panel, resulting in 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff losing their jobs. *—PTI*

PADMA AWARDS 2025

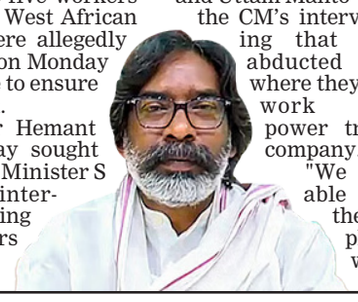
Cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin, Tamil film actor S Ajith Kumar, and Telugu film actor Nandamuri Balakrishna receive the Padma Shri during the Civil Investiture Ceremony-I at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

J'khand residents urge Centre to save workers abducted in Niger

RANCHI, 28 APRIL

Residents of a Jharkhand village from where five workers went to Niger, a West African country, and were allegedly abducted there, on Monday urged the Centre to ensure their safe return.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Sunday sought External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's intervention in helping the five workers from the state.



Families of five workers – Sanjay Mahto, Faljit Mahto, Raju Mahto, Chandrika Mahto and Uttam Mahto – had sought the CM's intervention, saying that they were abducted in Niger where they had gone to work with a power transmission company.

"We were not able to contact them over the phone. Later we contacted others who have been working there and came to know that five labourers were kidnapped. We want them to return safe," Mundro panchayat resident said. All five hailed from Giridih district .

"Union External Affairs Minister, Honourable @Dr S Jaishankar Ji is requested to please provide help to our migrant brothers from Jharkhand who have been kidnapped in Niger as per information," Soren posted on x on Sunday. *—PTI*

Security personnel escort Mumbai terror attacks accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana after he was produced at the Patiala House Court, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

26/11 attack: Delhi court extends Rana's NIA custody

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

A Delhi court on Monday extended by 12 more days the NIA custody of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana.

Special NIA judge Chander Jit Singh extended Rana's custody on NIA's request after his previous 18-day remand got over.

Rana was produced in court with his face covered amid tight security.

Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan and special public prosecutor Narender Mann are representing the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the matter which is taking place in chamber.

Advocate Piyush Sachdeva from Delhi Legal Services Authority is representing Rana.

In its previous remand order, the court directed the NIA to conduct Rana's medical examination every 24 hours and allow him to meet his lawyer every alternate day.

The court allowed Rana to use only a "soft-tip pen" and meet his lawyer in the presence of the NIA officials, who would be out of an audible distance.

During the arguments on the last occasion, the NIA said Rana's custody was required to piece together the full scope of the conspiracy, and submitted he was required to be taken to various locations for retracing the events that took place 17 years ago.

Rana, a close associate of 26/11 main conspirator David Coleman Headley was brought to India after US Supreme Court dismissed his review plea. *—PTI*

No file lost in Mumbai office fire says ED

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said that while certain documents and furniture have been burnt in the fire at one of its offices in Mumbai, "no impediment" in probes or trial was expected as files are also stored digitally.

Prima-facie reason for fire appears to be short-circuit at power boxes on the fourth floor, it said.

"Evidentiary documents pertaining to investigation and relied upon documents are invariably stored in the form of digital records, as well as stored in internal centralised record keeping system. With regard to the cases where prosecution complaints have been filed, the original records are available with courts concerned," the ED said. No impediment in investigation or trial is expected, it said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, however, said not a single paper was burnt in the fire. Questioning the 'delay' in dousing the fire, NCP(SP) MP Supriya Sule said, "Was there no fire audit of such an important building? " *—PTI*

ALARMING SITUATION

Class 10 students can't write names in English in UP madrasa

BAHRAICH, 28 APRIL

A surprise inspection at a madrasa in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich revealed that none of the Class 10 students could write their names in English, officials said.

Alarmed, authorities issued a warning and a notice to the madrasa and asked the seminary to focus on other subjects besides Arabic and Persian.

Qari Irfan, a faculty member at the seminary, said 15 students were enrolled in Class 10 so far, and of them 10 were present during Monday's surprise inspection.

"The students asked to write in English are new to this seminary. They are weak in English and could not perform to the satisfaction of the inspecting officials. We will hold separate classes for struggling students," the acting principal of madrasa, Maulana Shamsuddin, told PTI.

District Minority Welfare Officer Sanjay Mishra told reporters on Monday that the surprise inspection was conducted at Jamia Gaziya Sayyadul Uloom, a recognised madrassa in Badi Takiya area.

Alarmed, authorities issued a warning and a notice to the madrasa and asked the seminary to focus on other subjects besides Arabic and Persian **PHOTO: X**

One of the teachers was absent, even though it was not recorded in the attendance register, Mishra said and also noted that students' attendance in Munshi, Maulvi, and Alim classes was significantly lower compared to the registered number.

The findings led to an "alarming" academic situation, the officer said. "Neglecting the broader education of students is playing with their future."

The authorities warned the madrasa of strict action if immediate steps are not taken towards improving the quality of education. Shamsuddin pointed out that besides imparting religious education, the madrasa had provisions for teaching English, Hindi, Mathematics, and Science. "Which is why a science teacher had been appointed." *—PTI*

MEMORIAL SERVICE

People leave flowers and light candles at a memorial during a vigil for the victims of a car attack at a Filipino heritage festival, in Vancouver. Multiple people were killed and several were left injured after an SUV car rammed into the crowd at the Lapu-Lapu Filipino street festival in Vancouver, Canada on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

Water treaty on life support amid India-Pak tension

In 1995, World Bank Vice President Ismail Serageldin warned that whereas the conflicts of the previous 100 years had been over oil, "the wars of the next century will be fought over water."

Thirty years on, that prediction is being tested in one of the world's most volatile regions: Kashmir.

On 24 April, 2025, the government of India announced that it would downgrade diplomatic ties with its neighbor Pakistan over an attack by militants in Kashmir that killed 26 tourists. As part of that cooling of relations, India said it would immediately suspend the Indus Waters Treaty – a decades-old agreement that allowed both countries to share water use from the rivers that flow from India into Pakistan. Pakistan has promised reciprocal moves and warned that any disruption to its water supply would be considered "an act of war."

The current flareup escalated quickly, but has a long history. At the Indus Basin Water Project at the Ohio State University, we are engaged in a multiyear project investigating the transboundary water dispute between Pakistan and India. I am currently in Pakistan conducting fieldwork in Kashmir and across the Indus Basin.

Geopolitical tensions in the region, which have been worsened by recent attack in Pahalgam, Indian-administered Kashmir, do pose a major threat to water treaty. So too does another factor that is helping escalate the tensions: climate change

The Indus River has supported life for thousands of years since the Harappan civilization, which flourished around 2600 to 1900 BCE in what is now Pakistan and northwest India. After the partition of India in 1947, control of the Indus River system became a major source of tension between the two nations that emerged from partition: India and Pakistan.

Disputes arose almost immediately, particularly when India temporarily halted water flow to Pakistan in 1948, prompting fears over agricultural collapse. These early confrontations led to years of negotiations, culminating in the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960.

Brokered by the World Bank, the Indus Waters Treaty has long been hailed as one of the most successful transboundary water agreements
PHOTO: ANI

Brokered by the World Bank, the Indus Waters Treaty has long been hailed as one of the most successful transboundary water agreements. It divided the Indus Basin between the two countries, giving India control over the eastern rivers – Ravi, Beas and Sutlej – and Pakistan control over the western rivers: Indus, Jhelum and Chenab.

At the time, this was seen as a fair solution. But the treaty was designed for a very different world. Back then, India and Pakistan were newly independent countries working to establish themselves amid a world divided by Cold War.

Today, more than 300 million people rely on the Indus River Basin for their survival. This has put increased pressure on precious source of water that sits between two nuclear rivals. At the time of signing, there was a lack of comprehensive studies on glacier mass balance. The assumption was that the Himalayan glaciers, which feed the Indus River system, were relatively stable.

This lack of detailed measurements meant that future changes due to climate variability and glacial melt were not factored into the treaty's design, nor were factors such as groundwater depletion, water pollution from pesticides, fertilizer use and industrial waste. Similarly, the potential for large-scale hydraulic development of the region were largely ignored in the treaty.

The World Meteorological Organization reported that 2023 was globally the driest year in over three decades. The Himalayan glaciers, which supply 60-70 per cent of the Indus River's summer flow, are shrinking rapidly. A 2019 study estimates they are losing 8 billion tons of ice annually. While it may temporarily increase river flow, it threatens the long-term availability of water.

Another failing of the Indus Waters Treaty is that it only addresses surface water distribution and does not include provisions for managing groundwater extraction, which has become a significant issue in both India and Pakistan. Groundwater now contributes a large portion – about 48 per cent – of water withdrawals in the Indus Basin, particularly during dry seasons. It wasn't just climate change and groundwater that were ignored by the drafters of the Indus Waters Treaty. Indian and Pakistan negotiators also neglected the issue and status of Kashmir.

Despite being the primary source of water for the basin, Kashmiris have had no role in negotiations or decision-making under the treaty.

The region's agricultural and hydropower potential has been limited due to restrictions on the use of its water resources, with only 19.8 per cent of hydropower potential utilized. This means that Kashmiris on both sides — despite living in a water-rich region — have been unable to fully benefit from the resources flowing through their land, as water infrastructure has primarily served downstream users and broader national interests rather than local development.

Excluding Kashmir from future discussions – and neither India nor Pakistan has formally proposed including Kashmiri stakeholders– would only reinforce a long-standing pattern of marginalization, where decisions about its resources are made without considering the needs of its people. *—The Conversation*

SALAR ساہر

Why is Court of Justice weighing in on Gaza aid?

The top United Nations court on Monday will begin hearing from 40 countries on what Israel must do to provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

Last year, the UN General Assembly asked the International Court of Justice to weigh in on Israel's legal obligations after the country effectively banned the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, the main provider of aid to Gaza, from operating.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, voted against the resolution. Israel over a month ago again cut off all aid to Gaza and its over 2 million people. Israel has disputed that there is a shortage of aid in Gaza, and says it is entitled to block the aid because it says Hamas seizes it for its own use.

The Hague-based court has been asked to give an advisory opinion, a non-binding but legally definitive answer, in the latest judicial proceedings involving Israel and the 18-month war in Gaza. That is expected to take several months.

Set up in the aftermath of World War II, the ICJ is an organ of the UN and adjudicates disputes between countries. Certain UN bodies, including the General Assembly, can request advisory opinions from the court's 15 judges. All 193 UN member states are members of the ICJ, though not all of them automatically recognize its jurisdiction.

Last year, the court issued an unprecedented and sweeping condemnation of Israel's rule over the occupied Palestinian territories, finding Israel's presence unlawful and calling for it to end.

The UN General Assembly sought the opinion after a Palestinian request. The ICJ said Israel had no right to sovereignty in the territories, was violating international laws against acquiring territory by force and was impeding Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Two decades ago, the court in another advisory opinion held that Israel was violating international law by constructing a barrier between Israel and the West Bank.

That opinion, also requested by the UN General Assembly, dismissed Israeli arguments that the wall was needed for security. Israel has not participated in previous advisory opinion hearings but has submitted written statements.

South Africa went to the court last year to accuse Israel of genocide over its actions in the war in Gaza, which began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 51,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many are civilians or combatants. The offensive has reduced much of Gaza to rubble, and most of its people remain homeless.

Israel rejects South Africa's claim and accuses it of providing political cover for Hamas. South Africa also asked judges to make nine urgent orders known as provisional measures. They are aimed at protecting civilians in Gaza while the court considers the legal arguments.

The court has ruled several times on that request, including ordering Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza. The proceedings are ongoing and likely to take years to reach a conclusion.

The International Criminal Court was established in 2002 as the court of last resort to prosecute those responsible for the world's most heinous atrocities: war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression.

While the ICJ deals with disputes between two or more countries, the ICC seeks to hold individuals criminally responsible.

In November, a three-judge panel issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas' military chief, Mohammed Deif, accusing them of crimes against humanity in connection with the war in Gaza.

Warrants said there was reason to believe Netanyahu and Gallant have used "starvation as a method of warfare" by restricting humanitarian aid and intentionally targeted civilians in Israel's campaign against Hamas, charges Israeli officials deny.

The warrant marked the first time a sitting leader of a major Western ally has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the global court of justice and has sparked major pushback from supporters of Israel, including \ US.

Israel and its top ally, the United States, are not members of the court. However, Palestine is, and judges ruled in 2021 that the court had jurisdiction over crimes committed on Palestinian territory. *—PTI*

Israel says it is entitled to block the aid as Hamas allegedly seizes the goods for its own use
PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

AI boom reignites demand for coal power amid strain on energy supply

Coal-fired power plants, long an increasingly money-losing proposition in the US, are becoming more valuable now that the suddenly strong demand for electricity to run Big Tech's cloud computing and artificial intelligence applications has set off a full-on sprint to find new energy sources.

President Donald Trump—who has pushed for US "energy dominance" in the global market and suggested that coal can help meet surging power demand — is wielding his emergency authority to entice utilities to keep older coal-fired plants online and producing electricity.

While some utilities were already delaying the retirement of coal-fired plants, the scores of coal-fired plants that have been shut down the past couple years — or will be shut down in the next couple years — are object of growing interest from tech companies, venture capitalists, states and others competing for electricity.

That's because they have a very attractive quality: high-voltage lines connecting to the electricity grid that they aren't using anymore and that a new power plant could use.

That ready-to-go connection could enable a new generation of power plants — gas, nuclear, wind, solar or even battery storage — to help meet the demand for new power sources more quickly.

For years, the bureaucratic nightmare around building new high-voltage power lines has ensnared efforts to get permits for such interconnections for new power plants, said John Jacobs, an energy policy analyst for the Washington, DC-based Bipartisan Policy Centre.

"They are very interested in the potential here. Everyone sort of sees the writing on the wall for the need for transmission infrastructure, the need for clean firm power, the difficulty with siting projects and the value of reusing brownfield sites," Jacobs said.

Coincidentally, the pace of retirements of the nation's aging coal-fired plants had been projected to accelerate at a time when electricity demand is rising for the first time in decades.

The Department of Energy, in a December report, said its strategy for meeting that demand includes re-using coal plants, which have been unable to compete with a flood of cheap natural gas while being burdened with tougher pollution regulations aimed at its comparatively heavy emissions of planet-warming greenhouse gases.

There are federal incentives, as well — such as tax credits and loan guarantees — that encourage the redevelopment of retired coal-fired plants into new energy sources.

The pace of retirements of the nation's aging coal-fired plants had been projected to accelerate at a time when electricity demand is rising for the first time in decades
PHOTO: FREEPIK

Todd Snitchler, president and CEO of the Electric Power Supply Association, which represents independent power plant owners, said he expected Trump's executive orders will mean some coal-fired plants run longer than they would have — but that they are still destined for retirement.

Time is of the essence in getting power plants online. Data centre developers are reporting a yearlong wait in some areas to connect to the regional electricity grid. Rights-of-way approvals to build power lines can also be difficult to secure, given objections by neighbours who may not want to live near them.

Stephen DeFrank, chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, said he believes rising energy demand has made retiring coal-fired plants far more valuable.

That's especially true now that the operator of the congested mid-Atlantic power grid has re-configured its plans to favour sites like retired coal-fired plants as a shortcut to meet demand, DeFrank said. "That's going to make these properties more valuable because now, as long as I'm shovel ready, these power plants have that connection already established, I can go in and convert it to whatever," DeFrank said.

In Pennsylvania, the vast majority of conversions is likely to be natural gas because Pennsylvania sits atop the prolific Marcellus Shale reservoir, DeFrank said.

In states across the South, utilities are replacing retiring or retired coal units with gas. That includes a plant owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority; a Duke Energy project in North Carolina; and a Georgia Power plant.

The high-voltage lines at retired coal plants on the Atlantic Coast in New Jersey and Massachusetts were used to connect offshore wind turbines to electricity grids.

In Alabama, the site of a coal-fired plant, Plant Gorgas, shuttered in 2019, will become home to Alabama Power's first utility-scale battery energy storage plant. Texas-based Vistra, meanwhile, is in the process of installing solar panels and energy storage plants at a fleet of retired and still-operating coal-fired plants it owns in Illinois, thanks in part to state subsidies approved there in 2021.

Nuclear is also getting a hard look.In Arizona, lawmakers are advancing legislation to make it easier for three utilities there — Arizona Public Service, Salt River Project and Tucson Electric Power — to put advanced nuclear reactors on the sites of retiring coal-fired plants.

At the behest of Indiana's governor, Purdue University studied how state could attract a new nuclear power industry. In its November report, it estimated that reusing a coal-fired plant site for a new nuclear power plant could reduce project costs by between 7 per cent and 26 per cent. Even building next to the coal plant could cut costs by 10 per cent by utilising transmission assets, roads and buildings while avoiding some permitting hurdles, the center said.

Kathryn Huff, a former US assistant secretary for nuclear energy who is now an associate professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, said the department analyzed how many sites might be suitable to advanced nuclear reactor plants.A compelling factor is the workers from coal plants who can be trained for work at a nuclear plant, Huff said. Those include electricians, welders and steam turbine maintenance technicians.

In Homer City, the dread of losing its coal-fired plant — it shut down in 2023 after operating for 54 years — existed for years in the hills of western Pennsylvania's coal country. *—PTI*

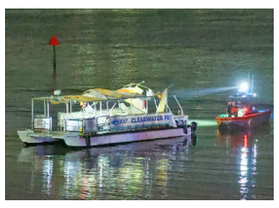


PHOTO: X

Many killed in Florida boat crash

CLEARWATER, 28 APRIL

Multiple injuries were reported after a boat collided with a ferry off the Memorial Causeway Bridge on Sunday, prompting authorities to classify the situation as a "mass casualty incident." The Clearwater Police Department confirmed that the ferry, carrying over 40 passengers, had come to rest on a sandbar following the crash. All injured individuals were aboard the ferry, and two of the more seriously hurt were airlifted to local hospitals after multiple trauma alerts were issued. First responders quickly arrived at the scene, and police urged drivers to avoid the Memorial Causeway. The boat responsible for the collision reportedly fled the scene, and investigations by the US coast guard are underway. —*PTI*

China and Philippines Clash over Sandy Cay

BEIJING, 28 APRIL

Tensions escalated in the South China Sea as six Filipinos landed on a disputed outcropping named Sandy Cay, just days after Chinese coast guard officers displayed a Chinese flag there. China's coast guard condemned the Philippine landing as "illegal," stating that enforcement measures were taken, although specifics were not divulged. Meanwhile, the Philippine coast guard confirmed that their team had conducted a landing operation, displaying the Philippine flag in a show of sovereignty. This incident follows a publication by the Global Times showcasing Chinese officers cleaning the area. The spat underscores ongoing territorial disputes, with China claiming nearly the entirety of the South China Sea, including Sandy Cay. —*PTI*

2 Indians charged with hotel robbery in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 28 APRIL

Two Indian nationals, Arokkiyasami Daison, 22, and Rajendran Mayilarasan, 28, have been charged in a Singapore court for allegedly robbing a woman in a hotel room. The incident occurred at the Amrise Hotel Kitchener, where the duo is accused of tying the woman's limbs and assaulting her before stealing her possessions, including a passport and SGD 2,000 in cash. Police were alerted shortly after the incident, leading to the rapid identification and arrest of the suspects within four hours through CCTV footage. All stolen items were recovered. Under Singaporean law, robbery with violence can result in a prison term of five to 20 years and a minimum of 12 strokes of the cane. —*PTI*

Sacred Buddha tooth relic expo concludes in SL

COLOMBO, 28 APRIL

The rare exposition of the sacred tooth relic of Lord Buddha in Kandy, Sri Lanka, from 18 April to 28 April, attracted hundreds of thousands of devotees. This significant event, the first since 2009, is aimed to unite the Sinhala Buddhist majority, Though the organisers anticipated around 2 million attendees, crowd control restrictions limited entry due to sanitation concerns. Municipal Commissioner Indika Kumari indicated substantial cleaning efforts underway, with an estimated 300 tonnes of waste generated. The relic, symbolising Buddhist holiness, is a significant part of Sri Lankan history and is housed behind a gilt railing, visible only to the public from a distance. Critics allege that President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's call for the event serves political interests ahead of the council elections. —*PTI*

Candidates make their last pitch as Canada votes

Polls open on Monday in an election defined by Trump

TORONTO, 28 APRIL

Canadians will decide Monday whether Prime Minister and liberal party leader Mark Carney or Conservative opposition leader Pierre Poilievre will fix the country's increasing cost of living and housing crisis.

But the election is also a referendum of sorts on someone who isn't even Canadian: US President Donald Trump.

Trump echoed his fixation to make Canada the 51st US state last week as he said Canada, "would cease to exist as a country" if the US stopped buying its goods. He also said he's not just trolling Canada when he says it should become a state.

Carney's notable experience navigating economic crises, having done so when running Canada's central bank and later after becoming the first non-UK citizen to run the Bank of England has positioned himself to be the best person to deal with the Trump induced crises. "President Trump has some obsessive ideas, and that is one," Carney said of his annexation threat.

"It's not a joke. It's his very strong desire to make this happen. It's one of the reasons why this crisis is so serious."

Poilievre, a populist firebrand who campaigned with Trump-like bravado, had hoped to make the election a referendum on former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his declining popularity. But then, Trump became the dominant issue, and Poilievre's similarities to the bombastic president could cost him. A record 7.3 million Canadians cast ballots before election day, many cancelling their vacations to US after Trump's truculence.

- A record 7.3 million Canadians cancelled vacations to US cast ballots before election day, after his remarks that Canada could be the 51st US state.

As Canada votes, the new Prime Minister will have to negotiate a trade deal with the Trump administration and also address the cost of living crisis in the country. —*PTI*

Yemeni soldiers inspect the damage reportedly caused by U.S. airstrikes in Sanaa, Yemen, Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

US STRIKES HIT MIGRANT CENTRE

DUBAI, 28 APRIL

Houthi rebels claim US airstrikes targeting Yemen's capital killed at least eight people overnight, and also hit a prison holding South African immigrants killing 68 and wounding 47.

Early Monday, the Houthis aired footage of what it described as a US strike targeting the Bani Al Harith District north of Yemen's rebel-held capital, Sanaa.

Houthis claim US strikes also hit their stronghold, Saada governorate where Ethiopians and other African migrants who try to cross over to Saudi for jobs are detained and later on 'smuggled' across the border for money.

US military's Central Command said its "Operation Roughrider" had "killed hundreds of Houthi fighters ," it refused to reveal specifics. The US has not acknowledged civilians deaths and insisted it would continue the strikes until it can restore freedom navigation and American deterrence in the region.

Meanwhile, the Houthis to restrict news issued a notice Sunday that all those holding Starlink satellite internet receivers should "hand over" the devices to authorities. —*PTI*

PRAYER FOR POPE

The Cardinals celebrated Second Vespers for Divine Mercy Sunday in Saint Mary Major, after pausing for a moment of prayer at the tomb of Pope Francis as Vatican closes Sistine Chapel to public and prepares for papal conclave to be held between 5-9 May to choose the new Pope **PHOTO: X@VaticanNews**

Parts of Spain, Portugal go dark

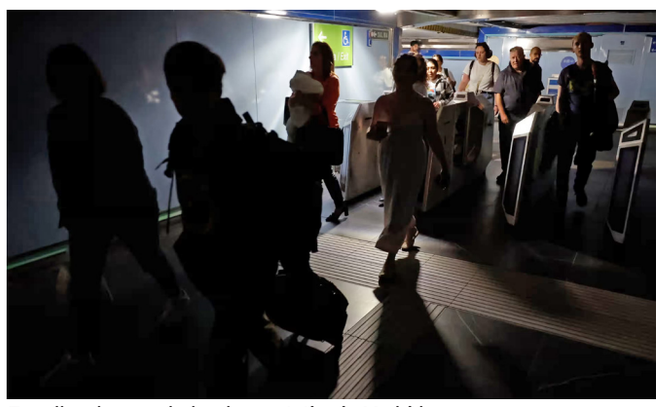
BARCELONA, 28 APRIL

A major power outage hit Spain and Portugal on Monday, knocking out subway networks, phone lines, traffic lights and ATM machines.

Spain's public broadcaster RTVE said a major power outage hit several regions of the country just after midday local time, leaving its newsroom, Spain's parliament in Madrid and subway stations across the country in the dark.

It is rare to have such a widespread outage there. Spanish generator Red Eléctrica said it affected the Iberian peninsula and the incident is being assessed.

In Portugal, the outage hit the capital, Lisbon, and surrounding areas, as well as northern and southern parts of the country. Portugal's government said the incident appeared to stem from problems outside the country, an official told national news agency Lusa.



Travellers leave a dark subway station in Madrid **PHOTO: MARISCAL/EPA**

"It looks like it was a problem with the distribution network, apparently in Spain. It's still being ascertained," Cabinet Minister Leitão Amaro was quoted as saying.

Portuguese distributor E-Redes said the outage was due to "a problem with the European electricity system and parts of France were affected," and said they would restore power in phases. In Lisbon subway cars were evacuated, courts stopped work and ATMs and electronic payments were affected. Traffic lights in stopped working. Mobile phone networks were down though some apps were working. —*PTI*

Kyiv wants global pressure on Putin

KYIV, 28 APRIL

Following Russia's launch of 70 missiles on Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasised the need for "more tangible" global pressure on Russia to facilitate "opportunities for real diplomacy" to end the war.

Highlighting the ongoing fighting and Russia's continued offensive, the Ukrainian President stressed that the "current global pressure on Russia is insufficient to bring this war to an end. By midday alone, there have already been nearly 70 Russian assaults on our positions.," Zelensky wrote on X.

"More tangible pressure on Russia is needed to create more opportunities for real diplomacy. I thank everyone in the world who stands with Ukraine," he added.

Meanwhile for the first time North Korea admitted it sent troops to Ukraine war under a mutual defence treaty signed in June 2024. —*Agencies*

A car burns against the background of a damaged private house following Russia's air raid in the Donetsk region, Ukraine, Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Hundreds pay tributes to victims of Vancouver car attack tragedy

VANCOUVER, 28, APRIL

Hundreds attended vigils and paid tributes to the families of the victims of the tragedy on Sunday when a car rammed into many killing 11 at a Filipino festival. The victims were of ages ranging from 5 to 65, police said adding some are still in critical condition.

Nathaly Nairn and her 15-year-old daughter carried flowers to one of the vigils. They had attended the Lapu Lapu festival festival on Saturday, and Nairn recounted seeing the damaged SUV and bodies on the ground.

"Something really dark happened last night," Nairn said, as she and her daughter wiped away tears.

Prime Minister Mark Carney cancelled his campaign on the final day of the election campaign before Monday's vote join British Columbia Premier David Eby and community leaders Sunday evening in Vancouver. —*PTI*

Hundreds pay their respects on Monday after a car drove into a crowd during a Filipino festival in Vancouver; (inset) The accused Kai-Ji Adam Lo **PHOTO: PTI**

Who is the Vancouver car attacker?

Vancouver, 28 April

Kai-Ji Adam Lo, 30 A was charged with multiple counts of murder when he rammed a car into a crowd of people killing 11 at a Filipino heritage festival in Vancouver. Lo has not yet entered a plea as he was presented in a video appearance before a judge on Sunday, said Damienne Darby, spokeswoman for British Columbia prosecutors. Investigators ruled out terrorism as a motive. They said Lo had a history of interactions with police and health care professionals related to mental health." —*PTI*

46 DIE IN IRAN PORT BLASTS

TEHRAN, 28 APRIL

As death toll in the Iran port blasts rose to 40, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has called for a thorough investigation. He urged security and judicial officials to identify any negligence, after a massive explosion on Saturday at Shahid Rajaee port near Bandar Abbas in southern Iran's Hormozgan province, Al Jazeera reported.

At least 46 people were killed and 1,000 others injured in the blast linked to alleged mishandling of missile fuel material.

Khamenei said, "Security and judicial officials are obliged to thoroughly investigate, uncover any negligence or intent, and follow up in accordance with regulations."

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday visited hospitalised blast survivors and expressed gratitude to first responders. He also pledged government support for the affected families and the injured. —*PTI*

HIGH ON GUNS IN 2024

Global defence spending soars to $2.7T

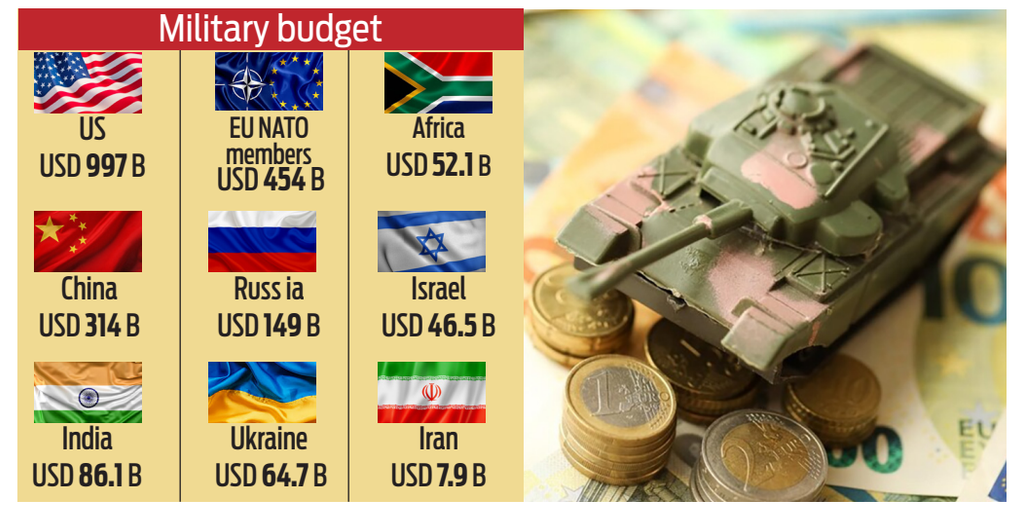
STOCKHOLM, 28 APRIL

Amid the major global conflicts, world military expenditure reached USD 2718 billion in 2024, the steepest year-on-year rise since at least the end of the cold war, according to new data by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The top five military spenders were the United States, China, Russia, Germany and India who accounted for 60 per cent of the global spending.

SIPRI, an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament, in its report on Monday, stated that all NATO members increased total military spending, was 55 per cent of global military expenditure.

Military spending by the US rose by 5.7 per cent, and the Middle East increased spending by 15 per cent from 2023. Israel's military expenditure surged by 65 per cent in 2024, however, Iran's military spending fell by 10 per cent in 2024 despite regional conflicts and its support for regional proxies, Meanwhile, China, the world's second-largest military spender, increased its military expenditure by 7 per cent . —*ANI*



Israel strikes on Gaza kill 27 amid aid block

DEIR AL-BALAH, 28 APRIL

Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip overnight into Monday killed at least 27 Palestinians, local health officials said.

An airstrike hit a home in Beit Lahiya, killing 10 people.

Another strike hit a home in Gaza City, killing seven people, including two women, according to the Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service. 2 other people were wounded.

Late on Sunday, a strike hit a home in the southern city of Khan Younis, killing at least 10 people, according to Nasser Hospital.

There was no comment from the Israeli military.

The daily bombardment and widespread hunger is taking a heavy toll on Gaza's most vulnerable residents. It has cut off the territory's 2 million Palestinians from food and medicine, in what it says is an attempt to pressure the Hamas to release hostages. —*PTI*

Palestinians look at the damage after an Israeli army airstrike in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip, Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO:xxx

Gold slips ₹1,000 to ₹8,400/10 gm amid US-China row

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Gold prices declined Rs 1,000 to Rs 98,400 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid weak global trend, said the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,400 per 10 grams on Thursday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated Rs 1,000 to Rs 97,900 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 98,900 per 10 grams. "Gold prices continued to decline as easing US-China trade tensions boosted investors' risk appetite, reducing demand for safe-haven assets while a stronger dollar added downward pressure on gold," Abans Financial Services' CEO said. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 38P to close at 85.03 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 28 APRIL

The rupee appreciated 38 paise to close at 85.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, supported by sustained foreign fund inflows, easing crude oil prices and a bullish trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said strong domestic fundamentals, such as rising forex reserves also boosted investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.29 and moved between the intraday high of 84.96 and the low of 85.42 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 85.03 (provisional), registering a gain of 38 paise over its previous closing level. Forex traders said a steady rise in reserves enhances India's import cover, providing a crucial buffer against external shocks and lending stability to the rupee. *—PTI*

Gunjan Soni joins YouTube as country managing director

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

YouTube on Monday announced the appointment of Gunjan Soni as the Country Managing Director for India. Soni has had successful stints at ZALORA, Star India and Myntra. She steps into her new role, following the exit of Ishan Chatterjee last year. With over two decades of leadership experience spanning business, technology, marketing, and e-commerce, Soni is set to lead YouTube's growth and innovation efforts in India, the Alphabet-owned video platform said in a release. Soni joins YouTube from ZALORA, where she served as Group CEO for six years based in Singapore. Soni said the way YouTube empowers creators and connects communities across India, is "truly inspiring". "I am both humbled and thrilled to join this dynamic team," she said. *—PTI*

Mahindra Lifespaces' FY25 sales up by 20%

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Mahindra Lifespaces Developers Ltd announced a 3 per cent decline in residential sale bookings, totalling Rs 1,055 crore for the latest March quarter. However, total pre-sales for the 2024-25 fiscal year surged by 20 per cent to Rs 2,804 crore. In comparison, sale bookings were Rs 1,086 crore in the fourth quarter of 2023-24 and Rs 2,328 crore for the entire previous fiscal year.

The company reported a 19 per cent increase in net profit, reaching Rs 85.09 crore for the quarter ending March 2025, up from Rs 71.48 crore year-on-year. Total income for this quarter saw a slight rise to Rs 55.44 crore compared to Rs 54.60 crore in the same period last year. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, net profit fell to Rs 60.94 crore from Rs 97.95 crore the previous year, while total income grew significantly to Rs 463.87 crore. *—PTI*

Sensex jumps 1,006pts on buying in RIL, pvt banks

Foreign inflows help markets cut down 2 days of fall

MUMBAI, 28 APRIL

Benchmark Bombay Stock Exchange Sensex soared by 1,006 points to close above 80,000 level on Monday as a sharp rally in Reliance Industries and private banks, and foreign fund inflows helped stock markets cut short two days of fall amid India-Pakistan border tensions.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,005.84 points or 1.27 per cent to settle at 80,218.37 with 23 of its constituents ending with gains and seven in the red. During the day, it surged 1,109.35 points or 1.40 per cent to 80,321.88.

The NSE Nifty rallied 289.15 points or 1.20 per cent to close at 24,328.50.

All key sectors, barring IT, participated in the rally, with pharma, energy, and auto emerging as the top gainers.

Reliance Industries surged by 5.27 per cent to emerge as the biggest gainer among Sensex stocks. The oil-to-retail behemoth reported a 2.4 per cent rise in March quarter net profit beating street estimates.

Mahindra & Mahindra spurted 2.29 per cent after the auto major announced a Rs 555-crore acquisition of SML Isuzu and said that the buyout was a strong strategic fit for the company that would put it in a strong position. SML Isuzu Ltd shares, on the other hand, tanked 10 per cent.

Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro and ICICI Bank were also among the Sensex gainers. HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Nestle and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,952.33 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

Foreign investors have infused Rs 17,425 crore in the country's equity markets last week, supported by a combination of favourable global cues and strong domestic macroeconomic fundamentals.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 settled in the positive territory while Shanghai SSE Composite and Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended lower. *—PTI*

All key sectors, barring IT, participated in the rally; pharma, energy, and auto were the top gainers *PHOTO: PTI*

GENSOL SHARES TUMBLE FOR 13TH DAY

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Gensol Engineering shares contined its fall on Monday, dropping 5 per cent, to hit a fresh lower circuit limit, amid the ongoing crisis at the firm. The stock of the firm tanked 5 per cent to hit the lowest trading permissible limit as also its 52-week low of Rs 86.50 on the BSE. At the NSE, it dropped 5 per cent to Rs 85.65 -- its lower circuit as well as 52-week low level. The stock has been falling for the 13th trading day, including Monday, and has slumped 47 per cent during this time. From its 52-week high of Rs 1,125.75, the stock has lost 92.31 per cent. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

US tariffs to choke Indian auto parts exporting sector

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The Indian auto component industry faces fresh headwinds as newly imposed US tariffs threaten to dent exporters' earnings significantly, according to ICRA.

The rating agency estimates that the tariff-related impact could erode operating profits by Rs 2,700-4,500 crore, equivalent to 10-15 per cent of the operating profits of auto component exporters and 3-6 per cent of the overall industry's operating profits.

ICRA projects that revenue growth for the Indian auto component sector, represented by a sample of 46 key players with combined annual revenues of over Rs3 lakh crore in FY2024, could moderate to 6-8 per cent in FY2026, down from the earlier forecast of 8-10 per cent.

This downgrade is largely attributed to a potential mid- to high-single-digit decline in exports to the US, following a sharp escalation in import tariffs.

Operating margins for the industry are expected to soften by 50-100 basis points (bps) to 10.5-11.5 per cent in FY2026, while the impact on exporters could be even sharper, with a projected margin contraction of 150-250 bps.

Despite these pressures, ICRA maintains that debt metrics and liquidity are likely to remain comfortable for most exporters in its sample, although margins could decline and working capital requirements may rise.

Roughly 65 per cent of India's auto component export basket is estimated to be affected by the new tariffs. Although a reciprocal tariff by India was temporarily paused for 90 days, an ad valorem duty of 10 per cent remains applicable.

ICRA believes India could benefit in the medium term if its cost competitiveness improves relative to China, particularly as global OEMs reassess their sourcing strategies. *—ANI*

The committee has been established under the chairmanship of Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

Govt's NMM panel begins discussions

- The mission's five focus areas are: ease and cost of doing business; future-ready workforce for in-demand jobs; a vibrant and dynamic MSME sector; availability of technology; and quality products

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The government has set up an inter-ministerial committee to frame the broad contours of the proposed national manufacturing mission (NMM) announced in the Budget in February, an official said.

The committee, established under the chairmanship of Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam, is holding a series of stakeholder consultations. On 1 February, the government announced the setting up of the mission to further promote the Make in India initiative.

The mission's mandate will include five focus areas: ease and cost of doing business; future-ready workforce for in-demand jobs; a vibrant and dynamic MSME sector; availability of technology; and quality products. It will also cover small, medium and large industries.

"Stakeholders' consultations are on, including with states and domestic industry. The committee will look at the framework of the mission," the official added.

The country's manufacturing accounts for about 16-17 per cent of the GDP, and the government is looking to increase the share.

The mission will provide policy support, governance and monitoring framework for central ministries and states.

An industry expert said the proposed mission is expected to enhance competitiveness, increase efficiency, foster innovation, integrate domestic manufacturing into global value chains and make India a globally competitive manufacturing hub. *— PTI*

'86% of power addition is green'

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

A recent report by Antique Stock Broking has revealed that renewable energy is propelling the expansion of India's power sector, with nearly 86 per cent of the 33 gigawatts (GW) added in FY 2024-25 originating from renewable sources. This surge has raised India's total installed power capacity to 475 GW, reflecting a significant shift towards clean energy.

It says the share of renewables in India's total installed capacity has now increased to 36 per cent, a steady rise from previous years. Notably, in March 2025 alone, the country added 5 GW of new capacity exclusively from renewable sources, highlighting the growing policy support and heightened investor interest in this sector.

While power generation growth remained robust at around 6 to 7 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in February and March, it decelerated to about 2 per cent YoY in April. Despite no growth in the first ten days of the month, an uptick was seen in the latter weeks. This slowdown, coupled with a high base from last year, has resulted in short-term power prices declining by 14 per cent YoY so far in April.

Power sector stocks have, however, thrived, gaining between 10 per cent and 20 per cent over the past two to three months. Current average valuations for power stocks are around 2.2 times the price-to-book value, reflecting a premium backed by expectations of increased capital expenditure in the sector. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

LG ELECTRONICS IPO TO BE DELAYED

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

South Korean major LG Electronics has delayed the upcoming initial public offering (IPO) for its Indian unit, amid volatility in the local share markets, according to industry insiders.

Earlier, the South Korean Chaebol was planning the IPO and subsequent listing of LG Electronics India on the bourse in the second week of May. However, it has been deferred for at least one quarter. LG may delay the IPO even further, if in August the consumer electronics major finds market sentiment not good, industry insiders told PTI.

The IPO, which was estimated to be around Rs 15,000 crore in some media reports, had not attracted a very warm reception from the investors, they said. The market is facing uncertainties from the new tariff regulation by the Trump administration, and also the terror attack at Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir.An LG Electronics spokesperson said a final decision on this will be taken based on market conditions.

On 6 December, 2024, LG had filed preliminary papers with Sebi for an IPO wherein the parent company will sell over 10.18 crore shares. *—PTI*

REC LTD RAISES ₹5,000 CRORE VIA BONDS

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

State-owned REC Ltd on Monday said it has raised Rs 5,000 crore through issuance of bonds. The offering included Rs 3,000 crore through five-year bonds at a coupon of 6.87 per cent and Rs 2,000 crore through 10-year bonds at a coupon of 6.86 per cent, a company statement said. The statement said, the bond issuance witnessed an overwhelming response from market participants, reflecting strong investor confidence in the company's robust financial position and growth prospects. The bonds will be listed on both the BSE and the NSE, enhancing their liquidity and offering investors easy tradability. *—PTI*

PV industry to hit 50M units export volume

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The passenger vehicle industry in India is anticipated to achieve a record cumulative domestic and export volume of 5 million units this fiscal year, according to Crisil Ratings. However, the annual growth rate is predicted to slow to between 2-4 per cent, following a remarkable 25 per cent surge in FY 2023, post-pandemic.

The electric vehicle (EV) segment, while experiencing new launches and decreasing battery costs, is expected to see moderate penetration of just 3-3.5 per cent due to high prices, limited charging infrastructure, and range anxiety. This restricts EVs mainly to urban users as secondary vehicles.

Crisil Ratings remarked that the current entry of global premium EV models, including those from Tesla, is likely to heighten competition in the premium segment, which constitutes under 10 per cent of overall volumes.

Despite slowing growth, utility vehicles (UVs) are projected to flourish with around 10 per cent growth. With UVs contributing 68-70 per cent of total sales, a structural shift towards premiumisation is evident. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

CREDIT CHALLENGES

'Biz women favour tailored financial products'

- Women entrepreneurs from Tier II, III towns are ambitious, digitally aware, and determined to grow, but held back by structural gaps in finance, networks, and visibility, the report said

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Most women running small businesses in tier II and smaller cities want customised financial products to suit their requirements and one third of such entrepreneurs still face challenges in accessing credit despite various schemes that are in place, a report said.

Strict collateral requirements and low financial literacy create a cycle of exclusion and to fix these issues urgent policy changes are needed to encourage alternative credit options, like collateral-free microloans and gender-sensitive lending practices, according to the Bharat Women Aspiration Index (BWAI) 2025 released by a business management platform Tide.

Women entrepreneurs from Tier II, III and beyond towns are ambitious, digitally aware, and determined to grow – but they are held back by structural gaps in finance, networks, and visibility, the report released on Monday said.

Tide surveyed over 1,300 new and existing women business owners, aged 18-55 years, across non-metro cities for the second edition of BWAI.

Notably, 58 per cent emphasised the need to enhance their financial and business management skills, while 12 per cent expressed a strong desire to develop digital competencies, it said.

Nearly 28 per cent of respondents said they always need a male family member to be involved when seeking funding, creating a major obstacle in their journey as entrepreneurs, it said.

The BWAI urvey report suggested that investing in digital skills, raising awareness of support programmes, and improving networking and mentorship –while tackling societal biases – will help women entrepreneurs turn their goals into reality and drive sustainable economic growth. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Ather IPO subscribed 16% on Day 1 of offer

- Ather Energy on Friday said it mobilised Rs 1,340 crore from anchor investors. The Rs 2,981-crore public issue, with a price band of Rs 304-321 apiece, is available from 28–30 April

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

The initial public offer (IPO) of electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy received a 16 per cent subscription on the first day of bidding on Monday. The initial share sale received bids for 86,09,406 shares against the 5,33,63,160 shares on offer, NSE data revealed.

The portion for retail individual investors (RIIs) fetched 63 per cent of subscriptions while the quota for the non-institutional category received 16 per cent of subscriptions.

Ather Energy Ltd on Friday said it has mobilised Rs 1,340 crore from anchor investors. The Rs 2,981-crore public issue, with a price band of Rs 304-321 apiece, is available for public subscription from April 28-30.

This is the first mainboard public issue of the current financial year (2025–26). The IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 2,626 crore and an offer-for-sale of 1.1 crore equity shares by promoters and other shareholders.

At the upper end of the price band, the IPO size is pegged at Rs 2,981 crore, placing the company's overall valuation at Rs 11,956 crore. This is the second electric two-wheeler company to go public after Ola Electric Mobility floated its Rs 6,145-crore IPO in August last year. *—PTI*

DC eye middle-overs gain against KKR

Beaten twice, team aims to avoid any slip-up at crucial time

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

Delhi Capitals (DC) will look to sharpen their batting in the crucial middle overs when they face a faltering Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the IPL on Tuesday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

DC have lost two of their last four matches, including a recent defeat to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, and will aim to avoid any slip-up as the tournament enters its business end. Abishek Porel has impressed with his aggressive approach at the top, but veteran Faf du Plessis, in his comeback game, struggled on Kotla's slow surface and will need to adapt quickly.

Rahul, DC's leading run-scorer this season, failed to accelerate against spin on Sunday. However, he will back himself to take on KKR's experienced spinners Sunil Narine and Varun Chakaravarthy. Karun Nair is expected to play a stabilising role to ensure Rahul isn't burdened alone in the middle order.

DC's bowling saw Axar Patel lead from the front with two wickets, though he lacked support from the rest. Mitchell Starc, who went wicketless against RCB, will aim to target weaknesses in his former side. Kuldeep Yadav's spin remains key in the middle overs. Fielding also remains a concern, with Porel's dropped catch of Krunal Pandya proving costly last match.

KKR, led by Ajinkya Rahane, are seventh with just seven points and are winless in their last three games. Their batting order remains unsettled, frequently rotating Quinton de Kock and Rahmanullah Gurbaz as openers, while over-reliance on Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi has been apparent. The middle order, including Russell and Rinku Singh, has underperformed. *—PTI*

DC's bowling saw Axar Patel lead from the front, though he lacked support from the rest **PHOTO: PTI**

> I try and make sure my singles and doubles don't stop, so that the game doesn't get stagnant. People are forgetting the importance of partnerships, and that's coming to the fore in this tournament to try and dominate the bowlers through partnerships and professionalism
>
> —Virat Kohli, RCB batsman

> But the way KL Rahul is playing cricket now, he would be my first choice to bat at four, and keep wickets for India
>
> —Delhi Capitals mentor Kevin Pietersen

DC VS KKR

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	34
DC Won:	15
KKR Won:	18
NO RESULT	1

DC vs KKR Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

AUSSIE PODCASTERS REMOVE IPL CONTENT AFTER BCCI NOTICE

SYDNEY, 28 APRIL

Sam Perry and Ian Higgins **PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/ THEGRADECRICKETER**

Popular Australian podcast 'The Grade Cricketer' has removed all videos related to the 2025 Indian Premier League from its social media channels after receiving a "polite legal letter" from the BCCI.

Hosts Sam Perry and Ian Higgins said on Monday's episode that they voluntarily took down content across YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and X following the notice, which arrived Saturday evening.

"This is something we've done ourselves," Perry explained. "We received a very polite legal letter about elements of our content from this season's tournament."

According to 'The Sydney Morning Herald', the BCCI's objection was that the videos featured still images from the tournament used in what it deemed a "commercial" rather than "editorial" context.

The IPL's media guidelines clearly state that audio and video provided are for editorial use only and cannot be uploaded on social platforms.

Despite the takedown, Perry confirmed the duo would continue their IPL coverage and are heading to India this week for live shows. Their daily segment 'The Big IPL Breakfast' will also be renamed, possibly to 'The Big Cricket Tournament Breakfast'. *—PTI*

Aditi finishes T-62 at Chevron Championship

THE WOODLANDS, 28 APRIL

Indian golfer Aditi Ashok faced a challenging final day at the Chevron Championship, finishing with an even-par 72 and tying for 62nd overall. After narrowly making the cut on the second day, Aditi recorded rounds of 72-74-77-72, culminating in a total score of seven-over 295. In her final round, Aditi started with a bogey on the second hole but quickly responded with a birdie on the third. She continued her seesaw performance, suffering another bogey on the seventh but regaining a stroke with a birdie on the 12th, ultimately finishing at 72. Japan's Mao Saigo claimed victory in a gripping playoff. Despite leading by one stroke heading into the final hole, Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn dropped a bogey, tying with Saigo and others before the play-off decision. *—PTI*

Anirban Lahiri finishes T-22 at LIV Golf Mexico City

MEXICO CITY, 28 APRIL

Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri concluded the final round of the LIV Golf Mexico City with a score of two-over 73, placing him T-22 in the tournament. Starting on the 18th, Lahiri made a strong impression with an opening birdie and added two more on the second and twelfth holes. However, he faced setbacks with bogeys on the sixth, tenth, and thirteenth, as well as a double bogey on the Par-4 third hole. Joaquin Niemann celebrated his third victory of the season, performing impressively with rounds of 64-65 following an initial 68. With his mother present for the first time at an event outside Chile, Niemann overtook major champions Bryson DeChambeau and Cameron Smith to secure his win. *—PTI*

India in Group D for Women's Asian Cup qualifiers

NEW DELHI, 28 APRIL

India has been drawn alongside Myanmar, Indonesia, and Turkmenistan in Group D of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup qualifiers, following the draw held in Kuala Lumpur. The qualifiers will be hosted by Myanmar from 6 to 10 August in a centralised single round-robin format. A total of 33 teams have been grouped into eight categories, with Group A featuring five teams and the remaining groups containing four teams each. The group winners, along with the three best runners-up and host nation Thailand, will advance to the final tournament, scheduled to take place from 1 to 18 April. This edition marks an expansion from eight to twelve teams, with the top four teams earning spots in the 2026 FIFA U20 Women's World Cup. *—PTI*

Arjan Singh Memorial hockey begins on 29 April

CHANDIGARH, 28 APRIL

The sixth edition of the Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh Memorial hockey tournament will commence on 29 April, featuring twelve teams including the Air Force Hockey team from Bangladesh. Other contenders include the Indian Air Force, Chandigarh XI, Punjab & Sind Bank, Central Industrial Security Force, Army XI, Indian Navy, Indian Railways, and Rail Coach Factory. Taking place at the Raghbir Singh Bhola Hockey Ground at the Air Force Station, the tournament will follow a league-cum-knockout format. The champions will receive Rs 3 lakh, while the runners-up will secure Rs 2 lakh. Individual accolades include Rs 10,000 for each match's Man of the Match and Rs 25,000 for the Player of the Tournament. *—PTI*

Women's tri-series: India looks to keep winning run intact

COLOMBO, 28 APRIL

Having launched their campaign with a commanding nine-wicket victory against Sri Lanka, India's women's cricket team is poised to continue their winning streak as they prepare to face South Africa in the second match of the tri-series on Tuesday.

India's recent performance marks their seventh consecutive win in One Day Internationals (ODIs). The 'Women in Blue' showcased their prowess in all facets of the game, with bowlers Sneh Rana, Deepti Sharma, and Shree Charani successfully limiting Sri Lanka to a modest total. The batting trio of Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, and Harleen Deol also delivered impressive innings, supported by sharp fielding.

On the back of this momentum, India holds a favourable record against South Africa, having not lost to them in ODIs since March 2022, including a clean sweep in their last 50-over series against them. The Indian team's recent outings in the Women's Premier League have further enhanced their match readiness.

As India gears up for the clash, spinners are expected to play a pivotal role, while the side continues to assess its pacers in anticipation of the upcoming 50-over World Cup to be held at home later this year.

Conversely, South Africa, who are beginning their campaign on Tuesday, are under the guidance of new coach Mandla Mashimbyi, who is yet to gain experience in women's cricket. The team will miss senior all-rounder Marizanne Kapp but will look to players like Sune Luus and Laura Wolvaardt for leadership.

The match is scheduled to begin at 10 am IST. *—PTI*

India bag 13 Gold at South Asian Youth TT

KATHMANDU, 28 APRIL

India achieved remarkable success at the South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships held in Kathmandu, securing 13 gold and three silver medals. The event, which served as a qualification for this year's Youth Asian Championships, showcased the dominance of the Indian contingent across multiple categories.

India claimed gold medals in the Under-19 girls, Under-15 boys, and Under-15 girls team events, sweeping all six golds in the U-19 and U-15 doubles competitions, including the mixed doubles. The Indian players also excelled in individual categories, winning four golds in the U-19 boys and girls singles events.

Hosts Nepal managed to secure one gold in the U-19 boys category, despite suffering a defeat to Pakistan during the league phase. Nepal finished at the top of the standings with seven points, edging out Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, who claimed second and third places respectively.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The team events saw Pritha Vartikar, Ananya Chande, Hardee Patel, and Diya Bramhachary clinch the U-19 girls gold after defeating Nepal 3-1. In the U-15 girls category, Prateeti Paul, Aarushi Nandi, Advika Arawal, and Tanmayee Saha triumphed over Sri Lanka with a decisive 3-0 victory.

In the singles finals of the U-19 boys, Kushal Chopda secured gold against fellow Indian R. Balamurugan with a score of 3-1, while Ananya Chande claimed the U-19 girls' title by defeating Pritha Vartikar 3-1, leaving Pritha with the silver. *—PTI*

Arsenal stun Lyon with a 4-1; reach Women's Champions League final

LONDON, 28 APRIL

Arsenal delivered a stunning performance, defeating Lyon 4-1 away to advance to the Women's Champions League final, eliminating the eight-time champions in the process.

Lyon, unbeaten across all competitions this season, had secured a 2-1 victory in the first leg of their semifinal clash in London last week. However, Arsenal turned the tide with goals from Mariona Caldentey, Alessio Russo, and Caitlin Foord, alongside an own goal from Lyon goalkeeper Christiane Endler, securing a 5-3 win on aggregate and setting up a final face-off against defending champions Barcelona.

Earlier, Barcelona had thrashed Chelsea 4-1, having previously won the first leg by the same scoreline, to clinch their spot in the final at Lisbon's 50,000-capacity Estádio José Alvalade on 24 May

The Catalan side will face a resilient Arsenal team, which has come back from behind in both the quarterfinals and semifinals after losing the first legs to Real Madrid and Lyon. Lyon was aiming to exact revenge for their defeat to Barcelona in last year's final and to reach the final for a record 12th time, but Arsenal's attacking onslaught proved overwhelming.

It wasn't until the 81st minute that Lyon found the net, with Dumornay scoring a goal. Initially, Endler denied Kim Little with a save, but disaster struck on the following corner, as Lyon defender Egurrola inadvertently headed the ball into her own net off Endler's back. *—PTI*

India–Indonesia clash at BWF Sudirman Cup

XIAMEN, 28 APRIL

An under-strength Indian badminton team faces a daunting challenge in their must-win Group D match against Indonesia at the BWF Sudirman Cup Finals on 29 April. India began their campaign with a disappointing 1-4 defeat to Denmark, putting their hopes of advancing to the knockout stage in jeopardy.

With only two teams progressing from Group D, victory against Indonesia is essential. A loss would render their final group match against England a mere formality. India's challenge is compounded by the poor form of top singles players including Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, and PV Sindhu. However, Lakshya has previously beaten Indonesia's top men's singles player, Jonatan Christie, in their last two encounters, providing some optimism. Meanwhile, Sindhu is set to face world No. 11 Putri Kusuma Wardani after Indonesia's top player withdrew.

Conversely, Indonesia boasts a formidable array of doubles players, such as Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto, who rank among the world's best. India's chances have been further weakened by the absence of top men's doubles duo Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. The inexperienced pairing of Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi will need to rise to the occasion. India hopes to avoid another early exit from the Sudirman Cup. *—PTI*

20TH EL CHAMPIONSHIP

Celebration begins at Anfield as Liverpool wins Premier League

LIVERPOOL, 28 APRIL

Inside Anfield celebrations, as emotional Liverpool fans prepare to party into the night **PHOTO: X**

It was a day of celebration at Anfield as Liverpool claimed the Premier League title with a resounding 5-1 victory over Tottenham, securing their 20th English league championship and matching the record set by rivals Manchester United.

Fans arrived hours before kickoff, eager to participate in the festivities, which began with a procession of red smoke canisters and flags adorning the nearby streets. Despite conceding an early goal to Dominic Solanke, Liverpool rallied with a three-goal burst before halftime, sealing a title that has been in their sights throughout the season.

Manager Arne Slot, in his first year with the club after succeeding Jurgen Klopp, expressed his joy at winning the title, joining an elite group of managers who have achieved this feat in their first Premier League season, including the likes of Jose Mourinho and Antonio Conte. He also made history as the first Dutch coach to win the Premier League, a tribute to Klopp's successful tenure.

Unlike the 2020 title victory, which took place in empty stadiums due to Covid-19 restrictions, this celebration was shared with a jubilant home crowd.

The players danced on the pitch as supporters sang "You'll Never Walk Alone" in unison. *—PTI*

Inter Miami suffers first defeat of the season

FORT LAUDERDALE, 28 APRIL

Inter Miami tasted defeat for the first time this MLS season, losing 4-3 to FC Dallas on Sunday while Lionel Messi watched from a private box. Despite establishing a 3-1 lead, Miami squandered their advantage in the second half and fell to 5-1-3, accumulating 18 points.

The match turned when Dallas scored three unanswered goals in the latter stages. Pedrinho netted the decisive goal in the 81st minute, converting a clever assist from Logan Farrington. Goals from Osaze Urhoghide and Anderson Julio midway through the second half had already levelled the score, with Urhoghide finding the net from close range and Julio striking from 18 yards after a well-placed long ball.

Miami initially surged ahead with two goals in quick succession after Shaq Moore opened the scoring for Dallas in the eighth minute. An own goal by Moore in the 16th minute levelled the match, followed by Allen Obando's first goal for the club in the 29th minute and a strike from David Martinez in the 56th.

Messi, who played the full 90 minutes in Miami's midweek CONCACAF Champions Cup loss to Vancouver, did not feature in this match, and neither did his former Barcelona teammates Luis Suárez and Jordi Alba. *—PTI*

Messi, Suárez, Alba and Busquets, all rest, and Miami lose their first MLS match this season **PHOTO: X**